

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 16 DECEMBER 2021 AT 14:00 IN WATERSIDE TOWER AND ZOOM.

PRESENT:

Mrs Dolores Kelly (Chair) (Zoom)
Mr Michael Atkinson (Zoom)
Mrs Janet Gray (Zoom)
Ms Liz Kimmins (Zoom)
Ms Linda Dillon (Zoom)
Mr Colm McKenna (Zoom)
Mr Maurice Bradley (Zoom)
Mr John Blair (Zoom)

PSNI: (1) C/Supt Mel Jones
T/Supt Arnie O'Neill

PSNI: (2) ACC Alan Todd (Zoom)
C/Supt Muir Clark (Zoom)
Supt Norman Haslett (Zoom)

PSNI: (3) C/Supt Wendy Middleton (Zoom)
Insp Brian Mills (Zoom)

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Sinead Simpson, CEO (Zoom)
Mrs Dymphna Thornton, Director of Partnership
6 Board Officials
1 Board Official (Zoom)

- (1) Present only for Item 6.1
- (2) C/Supt Clark and Supt Haslett present only for item 6.2
- (3) Present only for Item 6.3 and ACC Todd present for 6.2 and 6.3

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Joanne Bunting and Jonathan Buckley.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The Chair asked Members to declare any conflicts of interests arising from the agenda. No conflicts of interest were declared.

NOTED

3. MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 18th November 2021.

It was:-

RESOLVED:-

- That the draft minutes of the Partnership Committee meeting held on 18th November 2021 be approved.

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG:

The Director of Partnership provided Members with an update on the Committee's rolling action log:

AP 17.5 from October 2020 and AP 26.7 from this September's meeting –

These actions relate to the work of revising the wording of the Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSP) Strategic Priorities, which were subsequently approved at November meeting of this Committee and ratified by Joint Committee on 19th November 2021, and which have been shared with PCSPs. Members agreed closure of these actions.

AP 26.8 – The Reporting Template to be used by PSNI District Commanders at PCSP Policing Committee meetings was launched at virtual training event

on 10th December 2021, with follow up training in 2022. Members agreed closure of this action.

AP 28.1, 28.2, 28.3, 28.4, and 28.5 – Letters were issued from Committee Chair following actions from Committee meeting last month, with responses received from PSNI and Department of Justice (DoJ). Members agreed closure of these actions.

AP 28.6 – Nominations received and Board Officials will progress arrangements for the Youth Policing Panel event. Members agreed closure of this action.

AP 28.7 – The Engagement Manager is liaising with relevant Chief Officer regarding organisation of visits to various branches within Operational Support Department (OSD) in 2022. T/ACC Donaldson is to provide number of dates which will be shared with Members to identify preferences. Members agreed to keep action open.

AP 28.8 – Programme of Work related to the Engagement Strategy has been updated. Members were informed that they can see copy of the work programme. Members agreed closure of this action.

AP 28.9 – Letter has been issued to the Vice Chair of Fermanagh and Omagh PCSP. Members agreed closure of this action.

NOTED

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Chair noted that letters have been issued and drew Members' attention to the correspondence related to Agenda Item 5.5 which contains response from DoJ regarding delivery timeline for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) legislation review.

Members raised a general point on need to ensure that all visits of Committee Members to external venues have a purpose and that Partnership Committee are not duplicating meetings that would best sit with other Committees.

It was:-

AGREED:

- Chair noted that Director of Partnership to raise the issue of Members visiting external venues with Senior Management Team (SMT) colleagues. **(AP 1)**

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Report on Policing Plan Measures 2.1.1 – Confidence in Policing

Officials noted that this is the second time this measure has been considered by Committee and provided an update on the PSNI Outcomes Based Accountability (OBA) report card provided.

Chair welcomed C/Supt Mel Jones and T/Supt Arnie O'Neill to the meeting.

C/Supt Jones covered the highlights in the report and noted the following:

- Slight decrease in public confidence, although the trajectory generally is positive.
- Acknowledged that the Board's confidence survey which is underway will be helpful.
- Victim focus and extending advocacy services was noted by PSNI.
- A schools survey which is underway will give strong insight on how PSNI may work with schools in the future.

Members discussed:

- PSNI “Hallmarks” and their intended impact, with the Committee Chair asking if PCSPs have been advised on the “Hallmark” implementation.
- Work which PSNI is doing with partners in respect of young people.
- The Youth Independent Advisory Group (IAG) which PSNI are currently establishing.
- The need to test for impact of Neighbourhood Policing Team (NPT) effectiveness, which may manifest itself in the Policing Plan Outcome 3 survey work.
- The lowered levels of confidence and the number of surveys underway.
- PSNI engagement with Nationalist/Catholic communities and with young people.
- The impact which budget pressures may have on Neighbourhood Policing and consequently on confidence in policing.
- The online surveys being conducted by PSNI, which Members advised they would wish to receive additional information on in the future.

In addressing Members’ comments, PSNI provided the following:

- The “Hallmarks” will help to better define the role and purpose of NPTs.
- Work underway in crime prevention and early intervention teams in PSNI and a strategy for engagement with young people which is almost complete.
- Work being undertaken with the Education Authority (EA) to develop a Youth IAG.

- Recognition the Youth IAG needs to be diverse therefore conversations are ongoing with EA to develop trust in young people to enable them to engage with PSNI.
- There are early survey findings with respect to rape crime and an acknowledgement of the need to improve care of victims in order to reduce the rate of attrition.
- PSNI noted the development of a qualitative/quantitative framework to measure NPT and general policing activity with the hope that this will be in place by March 2022.
- Acknowledgement that some survey processes can appear quite complex, however there is recognition that the public want tougher sentences and greater visibility.
- The recent PSNI officer recruitment campaign provided a rich source of information for PSNI engagement with key communities, and work is ongoing to develop a PSNI Children and Young People's Strategy.
- Notwithstanding emerging budget pressures, it is the intention that Neighbourhood Policing and response to calls for service will remain as key priorities.

It was:-

AGREED:

- PSNI to provide further information on the "Hallmarks" and Safer Schools Partnership. **(AP 2)**
- PSNI to provide a list of those consulted in respect of the Children and Young People's Strategy. **(AP 3)**

6.2 South Armagh Review (Recommendations: 2, 3, 18, 19, 26, 30, 32 & 34)

ACC Todd was joined by C/Supt Muir Clark and Supt Norman Haslett. Members received a presentation on progress to date in respect of eight of the recommendations contained in the South Armagh Policing Review.

ACC Todd opened the presentation noting that the review needs to be owned by the local community. Supt Haslett then proceeded to provide an overview of progress to date as noted in the PSNI presentation. This included:

- The increase in the establishment of the South Armagh Policing team.
- The revised shift pattern which was accepted by the majority of officers.
- The defined purpose for vehicle check points.
- An update on the Stakeholder Analysis work which is being conducted as referenced in Recommendation 32 of the Review.
- The establishment of an Independent Advisory Group as referenced in Recommendation 34 of the Review.

Members discussed:

- The positive work being done and the need to ensure this is communicated more widely.
- The need to ensure that Stakeholder Analysis is carried out with a consistent group of people and that it links to Policing Plan Outcome 3 work.
- The very positive changes being made in the South Armagh policing area and the need to ensure this is fed back to local representatives.
- Acknowledgement of the ease of accessibility to senior PSNI officers.

- Specific reference made to Recommendation 26 (Local Planning) and how this is progressing.
- Some concerns were noted in regards roads policing operations
- This review may be a valuable exercise to repeat in other parts of Northern Ireland.
- The need to ensure that milestones and key dates are met for delivery of Recommendations.

In addressing Members' comments, PSNI noted:

- PCSPs have been briefed along with other key stakeholders and feedback indicates that increased visibility of PSNI in the area has been well received.
- The Stakeholder Analysis being carried out is very valuable, with many local schools, sporting organisations and community organisations having been contacted as part of this exercise.
- PSNI commented on recent successful drug searches in the area, as well as the need to ensure that normality in policing continues to be evidenced locally.
- Signage regarding roads policing operations has a positive impact as a deterrent and preventative mechanism. It allows for highlighting of joint operations with An Garda Síochána
- The South Armagh Policing Review is not intended to be a lone piece of work; it will inform the improvement of policing across Northern Ireland.
- Acknowledgement that some recommendations have been delivered very quickly, however, some will be more protracted pieces of work.

NOTED

The Chair thanked PSNI for their attendance at the meeting.

6.3 Next Door App presentation

Chair temporarily stepped away. Vice Chair took Chair for a few minutes.

Vice Chair welcomed C/Supt Wendy Middleton and Inspector Brian Mills to the meeting.

Members received a presentation on Next Door App in which Inspector Mills provided an overview of the App. The presentation included:

- The advantages to policing in using the app, including examples of its support in improving confidence in policing and in tackling crime.
- The history of the App and its introduction to Northern Ireland.
- The differences of how the PSNI access the App versus how the public access the App.

Members discussed:

- Whether PCSPs were using the App and the difficulties that PCSPs may find in using it regarding the neighbourhood specific nature of Next Door app.
- Risks associated with the use of the App including “trolling”, security and the potential use of the App by criminals.
- Issues of oversharing of personal data by individuals on the App.
- The extent to which the App is being used across PSNI.

In addressing Members’ comments, PSNI noted:

- PCSPs prefer Facebook and Text Alert as aligned with their Action Plans, however PCSPs could use Next Door App at a council level.
- The App is independent and has moderators, and criminality has not been associated with the App.

- Advice from PSNI in regards all digital platforms is to refrain from publishing personal information.
- PSNI's use of the App is managed by the PSNI Communications Department with the App being regarded as an additional tool to be utilised but that there is also a wider approach in respect of Apps and online platforms as part of the PSNI Digital Strategy.

NOTED

The Chair thanked PSNI for their attendance at the meeting.

The Committee Vice Chair then indicated that he wished to take the opportunity to discuss PCSP Effectiveness with Committee Members.

Members discussed:

- Engagement with PCSPs in the context of Covid-19 and the sharing of best practice.
- Asking the Chief Constable to provide District Commanders assessment of PCSP effectiveness in each Council area.

It was:-

AGREED:

- Chair noted that Board Officials will organise a webinar with PCSP Managers. **(AP 4)**
- Chair noted that Board Officials will bring a paper to a future Committee in relation to the potential for a PCSP Awards Ceremony. **(AP 5)**

6.4 Proposed response to Road Safety Strategy (NI) to 2030 consultation

The Partnership Manager provided an overview of the proposed content of the new Road Safety Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2030 highlighting that the Strategy would be directly linked to the new outcomes framework for the Programme for Government. She also advised that it proposed 3 key outcomes; Safe People, Safe Roads and Safe Vehicles and proposes 4 key priorities to achieve these.

The Strategy is based on a collaborative approach to road safety and includes the work of central and local government, key delivery partners, the community and voluntary sector and the private sector.

The consultation has been issued to all PCSPs as delivery partners and whilst the Board has not been directly invited to respond, officials regarded it as important for the Board to provide a letter of support to offer the Board's commitment in relation to their oversight role to both the PSNI and PCSPs in relation to road safety.

Due to the timeframe for a response (10 January 2022), and the absence of a Board meeting in early January, the Partnership Manager requested that Members agree for officials to seek approval from the Board, by Written Procedure, to enable a timely response to be sent.

It was:-

AGREED:

- The Partnership Manager would seek approval by Written Procedure to issue the letter of support as recommended by the Partnership Committee. **(AP 6)**

6.5 ICO Training update

The Engagement Manager provided Members with an update on plans for training the Independent Community Observers (ICOs). In June 2021, ten new ICOs were successful in the recruitment process and all now have Access NI clearance. In order to carry out their role, the new ICOs will be provided with induction training by Board Officials, in collaboration with Deloitte, in January 2022. The training, together with a revised Handbook, will equip them with the necessary guidelines and skills to carry out their role in observing at the PSNI recruitment assessment centres.

Members discussed:

- The demographic breakdown of ICOs by community background, gender and age.
- The reasons for the revisions to the Handbook.

It was:-

AGREED:

- The Engagement Manager would provide a demographic breakdown of ICOs. **(AP 7)**
- The Engagement Manager would send an email to inform Members about revisions to Handbook. **(AP 8)**

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

To ask the Chief Constable:

- Can the Chief Constable provide the Committee with a written response which outlines District Commanders' assessment of PCSP effectiveness in each Council area.

8. Communications Issues/Opportunities

The Communications Manager highlighted the Policing Board's statement on the Budget, which PSNI were still to provide a position on, and the potential implications on Neighbourhood Policing due to reduction in Budget.

Members further discussed the Next Door App and the potential impacts of its use by PCSPs and by the PSNI more widely.

NOTED

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 Police Property Fund – verbal update

The Partnership Manager provided an update to Members in relation to progress in contracting with projects successful under the first call for applications in the Small Grants Scheme. She advised that 30 letters of offer have been issued with 20 of these returning their letter of acceptance. It is hoped that all will be fully contracted and operational in early January 2022.

A further project withdrew due to capacity issues and two other projects are due to provide updated sets of official accounts.

The Partnership Manager also advised that it is expected that a second call for applications will be launched in late January 2022 and that guidance for applicants has been further developed based on queries received by applicants in the first round. It is also hoped, restrictions permitting, that some successful project promoters from the first call will be invited to attend the launch to enable publicity to be produced and shared.

NOTED

9.2 Arrangements for Crossmaglen visit – verbal update

The Engagement Manager provided an update to Members on arrangements for the Crossmaglen visit. The Engagement Manager requested that Members decide whether they would be content for District Commanders to join the visit to the club and/or whether they would be content for local politicians to join the visit at the request of the Crossmaglen Rangers GFC.

Members also discussed the implications of the Omicron variant and potential new restrictions in January 2022, recognising that it may be necessary to postpone this visit. It was agreed that the decision on the visit proceeding will be taken at the start of January 2022, in line with prevailing PHA advice.

It was:-

AGREED:

- The visit to Crossmaglen GFC, when it takes place, is to be limited to Members of the Policing Board and relevant Board Officials in line with the original invitation to the Board from Crossmaglen Rangers GFC. **(AP 9)**

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as Thursday 17th February 2022 at 2pm.

(Meeting closed at 4:45pm)

PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE

December 2021

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Oliver Keely".

Chairperson