

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 17 DECEMBER 2020 AT 09:30AM AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD, WATERSIDE TOWER

PRESENT:

- Mrs Dolores Kelly (Chair)
- Mr Michael Atkinson
- (3) Mrs Joanne Bunting (part Zoom)
- Ms Liz Kimmins
- (4) Mr Tom Buchanan
- (5) Mr Mervyn Storey
- (6) Mr Mike Nesbitt
- Mrs Janet Gray (Zoom)
- Mrs Carmel McKinney (Zoom)
- (7) Mr Sean Lynch

PSNI:

- (1) ACC Alan Todd
- (1) C/Supt. Wendy Middleton

CSB:

- (2) Ms Julie Harrison
- (2) Ms Katie Taylor
- (2) C/Supt. Ryan Henderson

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

- Mrs A Stewart, Chief Executive (Zoom)
- Mrs Dympna Thornton, Director of Partnership
- 5 Board Officials

- (1) Present only for Item 6.1
- (2) Present only for Item 6.2
- (3) Participated via Zoom for agenda items 1 - 6.5, and joined the meeting in person at 11:55am
- (4) Present only for Committee Business
- (5) Present only for Committee Business Left meeting at 10:10am returned 10:40am, left 10:55am returned 11:00am
- (6) Present only for Committee Business Left meeting at 10:20am returned 10:25am
- (7) Left meeting at 10:45am returned 10:50am

1. APOLOGIES

No Apologies were received. The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting.

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 19 November 2020.

It was:-

RESOLVED:-

- That the draft minutes of Partnership Committee meetings held on the 19 November 2020 be approved.

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG:

Board Officials provided Members with an update on the Committee's rolling action log:

Action Point 17.3 - Initial communication has been carried out with The CSO and Board officials are awaiting a response, Members will be updated accordingly.

Action Point 17.4 – The Strategic Review was discussed by Joint Committee at their December meeting, a scoping paper is being developed and will be shared with Members in advance of going to Joint Committee.

Action Point 18.2 – IRC secretariat have been in contact with Board officials and have agreed to attend Committee meeting in February 2021.

Action Point 18.5 –Progress is being made to update the Annual Programme of Work and reflect a more inclusive list of engagement activity.

Action Point 18.6 – Officials currently exploring options for webinars for engagement.

Action Point 18.7 – Officials currently exploring options to hold a themed event for community groups, focussing on Modern Slavery and will update Members early 2021.

It was:-

AGREED

- A hard copy of the IRC report would be provided to Members in advance of IRC attending a Committee meeting; **(AP1)**
- Consideration would be given in organising a webinar between the NPTs, ACC Todd and PCSPs **(AP2)**

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Chair advised members that seven items of correspondence would be advised under this agenda item and invited the Director of Partnership to provide further details.

5.1 Letter from Chair to Julie Harrison (DoJ) re: Community Safety Board

The Director of Partnership asked members to note that an update will be provided at agenda item 6.2 **NOTED**

5.2 Letter from Board CEO to Justice Committee re: Regional Support Hub Scheme

The Director of Partnership referred Members to the letter of response from Board CEO to Julie Harrison, DOJ and asked them to note the Board's position as outlined in the correspondence **NOTED**

5.3 Letter from NCA to Chair – invitation to NCA Belfast Site

The Director of Partnership asked Members to note an invitation from the NCA to the Belfast site. Pending any Covid 19 restrictions which may in place at the time, Members are invited to visit the NCA Belfast site on the afternoon of 21 January 2021. **NOTED**

5.4 Letter from ACC Todd to Chair re: LPR revised timelines

The Director of Partnership asked Members to note the letter from ACC Todd the Chair who will attend the January Committee meeting to provide an update on the Local Policing Review. **NOTED**

5.5 Letter from C/Supt Donaldson to Chair re: Update on New Uniform Trial

The Director of Partnership asked Members to note the trial of the new PSNI uniform which runs to 17 January 2021. Update from PSNI to be provided at a future meeting. **NOTED**

5.6 Letter from Julie Harrison (DOJ) to Chief Executive re: Committee Review on Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime

The Engagement Manager referred Members to a letter from Julie Harrison, DOJ to Board CEO regarding a Board review of the PSNI's work under the Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime Programme. A Member suggested that DOJ should approach each political party directly re TPPT with the oversight function remaining with the Board. Update to be provided at future meeting. **NOTED**

5.7 Letter from Julie Harrison (DOJ) to Chief Executive re: Regional Support Hub Funding

The Director of Partnership referred Members to a letter received this week from Julie Harrison (DOJ) to Chief Executive regarding Regional Support Hub Funding and asked that Members note that assurance will be given to Board officials in relation to further developments. **NOTED**

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Policing Plan Measure 1.3.1 – Safe in Local Area/High St/Town/Home and Policing Plan Measure 1.3.2 – Places Repeatedly Victimised

The Police Performance officer presented the paper to Members and highlighted that whilst there is good information in the reports, there remains a lack of impact information to fully evaluate progress in the areas.

The Chair welcomed ACC Alan Todd and Chief Superintendent Wendy Middleton to the meeting and congratulated Chief Superintendent Middleton on her new role. In presenting the Measures, ACC Todd made the following points:

- A report from other UK forces suggests a 39% increase in Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) with some understood to be related to Covid and some not;
- Whilst there has been an increase in ASB across Northern Ireland, it is not to the same level;
- It is recognised that the normal support structures have not been in place for young people, for example, youth clubs and church groups and youth agency workers have not been working in the same way except for addressing particular issues such as bonfires;
- In looking at the future, with almost 400 NPT officers now in place, the focus is on the development of an effective shift pattern to ensure visibility in neighbourhoods.

Members made the following comments:

- Welcomed the OBA report card format and looked forward to enhanced reporting going forward with effective performance Measures;
- Questioned how the 'Active Listening' tool is being used and whether it is working;

- In relation to collaborative working between the PSNI and youth workers, whether agile funding streams have been able to address any gaps in main funding;
- Whether there is information in relation to repeat victimisation or crime patterns;
- Suggested that future reports contain 3-4 key messages as currently information could be interpreted in different ways;
- Questioned how work is progressing in actioning the CJINI recommendations in their recent report;
- Questioned the correlation between ASB and drugs and alcohol misuse and whether this is being examined and worked on at a local level in relation to identifying suppliers; and
- Discussed the 'Next Door' app and questioned its use in local areas.

In addressing Member's comments, ACC Todd and Chief Superintendent Middleton provided the following comments:

- The 'Active Listening' tool is part of the NPT training programme which will continue to be rolled out to NPT officers and work is ongoing to ensure that is fully incorporated and mainstreamed into everyday NPT practice;
- There is limited agility around funding and ongoing resource cuts will impact this further. As people account for 85% of PSNI spend, and PSNI are currently working on the assumption of a rollover budget, there is a focus on maintaining headcount including NPTs;
- There are opportunities to utilise the Community Safety Board to bring other funding;
- Whilst crime has been within normal trends, ASB has been impacted, however it is difficult to identify repeat victims. Local Districts have a better view of their own areas as these are discussed at daily and monthly meetings and this information is fed through to the Support Hub in each area to ensure a multi-agency approach;

- The Education Authority have been very responsive and have shown great flexibility in relation to requests for assistance but have been restricted during Covid;
- It is appreciated that there are gaps in reporting at present but work is ongoing to ensure that Local Policing Plans feed into the NI Policing Plan and that surveys are developed to improve reporting against the performance framework;
- There is appreciation that the report currently lacks data to draw out key messages. There is a need to identify key areas that demonstrate impact rather than reporting a high number of actions;
- An update is expected on the work to address the CJINI recommendations, however a 1 page briefing which includes timelines will be shared with the Committee for information;
- In identifying correlation between ASB and drugs and alcohol misuse, some Districts are better than others, however, NPTs are best placed in identifying key actors, such as suppliers and runners. It is important that there are local solutions to local problems;
- Further discussions with the Committee would be welcomed in relation to local structuring to ensure a multi-agency approach;
- PSNI are seeking, as part of their Digital Strategy, to enhance multi-level communications with a view to facilitating live communications with communities. They would welcome the opportunity to provide a presentation to the Committee on the Digital Strategy.

The Chair thanked the PSNI representatives for attending the meeting and welcomed a future presentation on the PSNI Digital Strategy

It was:-

AGREED

- A 1-page briefing on the timelines for the CJINI follow up would be provided to share with Members; **(AP3)** and

- PSNI would be invited to a future meeting to provide a presentation on their Digital Strategy. **(AP4)**

Due to agenda item 6.1 finishing earlier than scheduled which impacted the arrival of visitors for the next agenda item, Members agreed to proceed with the other agenda items until the visitors arrived.

6.3 Draft Committee Programme of Work (Jan – Mar 2021)

The Director of Partnership provided an overview of the Committee's Draft Programme of Work and invited comments or suggestions. The Chair recommended that Members pass any comments or feedback to the Director of Partnership as appropriate.

It was:-

AGREED

- Feedback/comments would be provided to the Director of Partnership regarding the Committee's Draft Programme of Work **(AP5)**

6.4 Independent Community Observers (ICOs) Update

The Engagement Manager presented the paper which provided an update on the forthcoming recruitment of Independent Community Observers (ICOs).

Members discussed:

- The need to look at what events in relation to engagement were carried out previously;
- Raised concerns that the sole use of social media would potentially discriminate against older people who may not use the platform and advised that the paper suggested exclusion of older people;
- Confirmed the need to ensure the widest possible engagement; and
- Questioned whether there had been an evaluation of the work of ICOs previously.

The Engagement Manager provided the following responses:

- Advised that there was an original intention to use events such as MELA to publicise the recruitment process however, it was necessary to use a digital platform due to the restrictions; and
- Confirmed that she would be bringing a paper to the January Committee which provides an evaluation of the last recruitment exercise.

The Communications Manager advised that the recent PCSP recruitment campaign demonstrated that social media had the greatest reach but confirmed that there would be direct engagement with specific groups, similar to the PCSP recruitment.

6.5 Police Powers and Protections Bill

The Director of Partnership presented this agenda item and advised that due to recent communication with the Department, Option 2 provided in the paper which proposes that the speed awareness course fees be received and managed by the Northern Ireland Road Safety Partnership (NIRSP) was not an option as the NIRSP cannot be named in legislation as it is a conglomeration of statutory agencies.

Members were advised that draft legislation states that the Board may be the Body to whom fees are paid, however, officials advised that with 26,000 attendees in the last 12 months, the administrative burden, should this be approved in the legislation, would need to be understood by the Board. In addition, Members considered whether carrying out this function would be at odds with the Board's role as an accountability body. Members agreed that this is not a function of the Board and requested that officials communicate this to the Department. It was also agreed that the draft response would be ratified by all Board Members at their extraordinary meeting on 18 December in advance of being issued.

It was:-

AGREED

- Members would draft a response based on Member's feedback and issue it to the Board for ratification at their extraordinary meeting on 18 December. This would then be issued to the Department **(AP6)**

6.2 Presentation from Community Safety Board Representatives (DOJ)

The Director of Partnership presented a short briefing paper on the Community Safety Board which included the Community Safety Framework, issued in October 2020.

The Chair welcomed Dr Julie Harrison, Director, Safer Communities, Katie Taylor, Head of the Community Safety Division and Ryan Henderson from the Department of Justice.

Dr Harrison introduced the team and highlighted that the Community Safety Board (CSB) was established to try and bridge the gap between policy and reality. Katie Taylor provided members with a presentation in relation to the CSB which included an overview of its work, its membership and future plans and direction of the group.

The Chair thanked the Department of Justice representatives for their presentation and invited Members' questions.

Members made the following comments:

- Emphasised the need to ensure that commitment feeds through to the local level;
- Raised concerns in relation to government departments taking such initiatives as CSB may not have a direct reactionary role as individual issues will go to specific agencies such as PSNI and will not necessarily go to the CSB;
- Questioned the role of SOLACE and how PCSPs fit into the process and the relationship between Support Hubs and this process;

- Stressed the need for a bottom up approach to ensure that the community voice is heard;
- Questioned the link between agile funding and the CSB;
- Recommended that the inclusion of other groups be considered, for example representation from the private sector may add value.
- Praised the work of Support Hubs but questioned the lack of powers;
- Welcomed an update on the Board's work at a later date.

In addressing the Members' comments, the DOJ representatives made the following comments:

- The genesis of the group was based on partners wishing to discuss and agree a Safety Framework at a higher level;
- The Board became a critical mechanism to address immediate community need in relation to Covid;
- Emphasised that the CSB is about partnership working and creating the connection between what is happening on the ground and how policy can be developed against it;
- Advised that due to the Board, practice could be changed to react to situations, for example, between the PSNI and the Education Authority;
- Advised that SOLACE is currently represented by one CEO and that PCSPs have been critical in bringing local issues, particularly around stress points such as Halloween;
- Confirmed that the Support Hub Steering Group feeds into the CSB and stressed the need to keep membership at a manageable level;
- Confirmed that a highlight report which would provide both quantitative and qualitative information would identify common issues to be addressed to avoid a level of silo working;
- PCSPs continue to be the appropriate vehicle to look at local issues;
- The CSB has no funding attached to it, however there was a small pot available for particular issues;
- The Community Response Group is critical in identifying immediate need, for example, bonfires and allows a closer look at local issues and

understanding whether they are common issues and if a legislative response is required;

- The Board uses already established mechanisms such as the Business Crime Partnership to ensure that there is input from various sectors;
- Every partner brings their own funding and powers in relation to shared problem solving and there is much effort happening through the Support Hub Steering Group to ensure effective working;
- There is active engagement with other agencies to discuss early intervention work.

The Chair thanked the Department of Justice representatives for their attendance and presentation and suggested a further update to the Committee when appropriate.

It was:-

AGREED

- The DOJ representatives would be invited to provide a further update on the work of the CSB at a future meeting as appropriate **(AP7)**.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

NONE

8. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

NONE

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

9.1 The Director of Partnership advised that a letter had been received from community groups representing the Black and Minority Ethnic population in Northern Ireland in relation to the response of the Chief Constable on the findings within the Thematic Review of the Policing Response to Covid-19. In considering the letter, Members agreed that the Board were still considering the Thematic Review report and would want to discuss the outworkings of the

findings. They would also need to consider the PONI report on the Black Lives Matter protests which was shortly due to be released.

Members also agreed that some of the comments within the letter are considered inappropriate and do not necessarily help with relationship building. They also noted that appeared to be a number of pre-conditions being imposed. Members requested that officials provide a response which advises that there are ongoing considerations of the Thematic Review and a need for consideration of the forthcoming PONI report in advance of further engagement.

It was:-

AGREED

- Officials would provide a response in line with Member's comments. **(AP8)**

Members also asked whether there was any intention for the Board to promote Scamwise messaging as scams have increased significantly over the last number of weeks.

The Communications Manager confirmed that Scamwise messaging has been scheduled for both the Board and the PCSP social media accounts and will be running over Christmas.

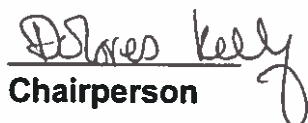
10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 21 January 2021.

(Meeting closed at 12:00 Noon)

PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE

DECEMBER 2020


Chairperson