

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY
19 NOVEMBER 2020 AT 10AM AT THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING
BOARD, WATERSIDE TOWER**

PRESENT:	Mrs Dolores Kelly (Chair) Mr Michael Atkinson (4) Mrs Joanne Bunting (Part Zoom) Ms Liz Kimmins (Zoom) Mr Tom Buchanan (Zoom) Mr Sean Lynch (3) Mr Mervyn Storey Mr Mike Nesbitt Mrs Janet Gray
PSNI:	(1) T/ACC Mark McEwan (1) Lindsey Jeapes
NCA:	(2) Mr Craig Naylor (2) Mr Gerry McClean
OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:	Mrs Dympna Thornton, Director of Partnership 5 Board Officials

- (1) Present only for Item
- (2) Present only for Item
- (3) Left the meeting at 12.30pm returned at 12.40pm
- (4) Participated via Zoom for agenda items 1 - 6.1, and joined the meeting in person for remaining items

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Carmel McKinney and John Blair. The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting. The Chair wished to note that the thoughts of Members are with Carmel at this difficult time.

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 15 October 2020.

It was:-

RESOLVED:-

- That the draft minutes of Partnership Committee meetings held on the 15 October 2020 be approved.

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG:

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

Action Point 17.3 remains open and officials are awaiting further guidance from Crown Solicitor's Office; and

Action Point 17.5 will be included at item 6.6 of today's agenda. **NOTED**

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

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

5.1 Response from Community Safety Board re: October Committee paper

The Director of Partnership asked members to note the response from Julie Harrison, Director of the Safer Communities (Department of Justice) which is included in the meeting pack for today's meeting.

It was:-

AGREED

- Board officials will arrange for the Community Safety Board to present an update at a future meeting of Partnership Committee **(AP1)**.

5.2 Letter from Chief Constable re: Committee Review on Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised - Recommendation (Officer Safety)

The Director of Partnership referred Members to the letter of response from the Chief Constable to the Board Chair concerning the Recommendation for PSNI as contained in the Board's Committee Review of Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime. The Chief Constable advised that a new command team in the Criminal Investigation Branch will review current practice and develop an action plan to address the recommendation. **NOTED**

5.3 Letter from IRC re: TP Review

The Director of Partnership asked Members to note a letter from the IRC in response to the Committee Review of progress in Tackling Paramilitary Activity, Criminality and Organised Crime. The IRC have offered to meet with Members to discuss implementation of the Executive Action Plan.

It was:-

AGREED

- Board officials will arrange for the IRC to attend a future meeting **(AP2)**.

5.4 Response to Justice Committee letter re: Regional Support Hubs Scheme

The Director of Partnership advised Members that this item of correspondence was a response from the Board's Chief Executive to the Justice Committee, following Members' input, regarding cessation of funding for Regional Support Hub Scheme.

Mervyn Storey advised that he had raised this matter as an Oral Question with the Justice Minister on 17th November, and advised that the Minister remains committed to Support Hubs and the work which they do.

It was: -

AGREED

- Board officials will draft a letter to convey the Board's position in respect of this matter **(AP3)**

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Policing Plan Measure 2.2.1 – Victim Satisfaction

The Police Performance Monitoring Manager introduced this item and provided an overview of the paper provided to Members which included the PSNI measure report and Board official's analysis. In providing this, she highlighted areas that Members may wish to consider when discussing the progress report with PSNI representatives.

The Chair welcomed ACC Mark McEwan and Lindsey Jeapes (Head of Performance and Insights, PSNI) to the meeting. In presenting the measure report, ACC McEwan made the following points:

- It is recognised that a number of the Policing Plan measures have levels of overlap with Committees, however, 'Satisfaction' covers a broader remit and is regarded as being in relation to all those that have had contact/service with the police;
- There remain challenges in assessing satisfaction as those coming through the system will either be offenders or victims, with a high number of those being considered vulnerable;
- Work has been carried out to improve the survey which goes out by text 2 weeks after the 10 day update. This can cause issues in relation to a time lag between coming into contact with PSNI and carrying out the survey;
- The time lag requires further work as it can impact the number of people willing to complete the survey;
- Vulnerable individuals such as victims of domestic violence or sexual offences are not contacted by text. Work has started to look at other ways of gathering victim satisfaction information for these individuals;
- It is recognised that some respondents may base their satisfaction assessment on how well the justice system worked for them rather than their contact with the police;
- Complaints were down by 10% from last year, however, there appears to be no particular reason for this other than Covid as crime itself had reduced;
- Looking at ways to engage with Victim Support in relation to a potential pilot with young people who regularly go missing as police officers are not necessarily the best first responders for these situations;
- A feedback service is also offered as part of the online reporting service with results reviewed monthly, for example, for October 2020 78% of respondents rated satisfaction as good/very good, 16% as satisfactory and 5% as poor/very poor;
- There are concerns around the threshold for reporting a malicious communications crime as the legislation was written long before social media – this needs to be taken forward with the Criminal Justice Board;

- Carrying out victim updates is regarded as very important and training is required to refresh officers on the importance of this follow up;
- Work is required to look at tailoring contact to different victims' needs to assist in managing expectations and ultimately provide a better service;

Lindsey Jeapes added the following comments:

- There has been much work to improve the survey over the last couple of years and also to look at issues around time lag;
- A free text box is now provided if a respondent chooses dissatisfied, this allows them to explain their reasons and will assist in identifying patterns or trends;
- In examining some of the patterns/trends, the number of responses from young people is low which may suggest that other media platforms are required to help them engage.

Members discussed:

- Questioned whether the 57% four year trend figure against the survey question 'I am satisfied with how well I have been kept informed of the progress of my case' reflects the service they have received or reflects an unreasonable expectation of the victim;
- Whether adjustments made to the survey would impact scope for longitudinal analysis;
- The low response rate from 18-25 year olds and whether this could be attributed to the type of communication platform or some other reasons;
- Whether there are current linkages with stakeholders in relation to young people responding;
- Whether there is a geographical analysis in relation to respondents;
- The need for a holistic approach with organisations such as Victim Support and using the PCSPs assist with more sensitive groups;
- Whether there is scope to compare results against Ombudsman's data in relation to complaints/concerns;

- The importance of achieving better outcomes and catching criminals and not necessarily about how nice a police officer has been.

PSNI provided the following responses:

- In general, if a victim does not get a resolution through the Justice System their satisfaction rate in relation to their contact with the police is lower – a conversation is needed regarding potentially outdated legislation;
- Qualitative information is needed to go with the survey statistics to inform this – the survey does not allow for this at present;
- Any amendments to the survey must be done in a considered and gradual manner to assess any impact on long term analysis. The impact of slight changes already made have been mapped;
- Work is required to fully understand whether the low response rate in young people is due to the communication medium – engagement with key stakeholders including PCSPs could be utilised to take this forward;
- Geographical information is not telling us whether there is disengagement in certain communities but there is a keenness to look at this more closely;
- Detail coming from the Ombudsman’s office is not comparable to allow analysis at this time – there is scope to request information that may align better to what PSNI are capturing;
- Work is ongoing to look at who is inputting information onto the NICHE system at the local level and whether this is the investigating officer;
- There is a need to look at enhancing satisfaction, particularly if the Justice System does not provide an outcome, including the use of Crime Prevention Officers and Community Resolution Notices;
- The recent Criminal Justice Inspectorate (NI) report has raised 7 recommendations, including the need for enhanced victim support training for student officers;

- The report also recommends an enhancement of skills in dealing with bereaved victims who have very different needs – this is already delivered well through the Special Crimes Unit, however an agreed protocol is currently being developed;
- It also recognises the need for a broader justice 'family' discussion;
- A support group will be set up to look at the recommendation around victim and witness care;
- Safeguarding Board have secured funding for a risk assessment tool to look at 'at risk' young people.

The Chair thanked PSNI for their attendance and input and PSNI left the meeting.

6.2 Presentation from the National Crime Agency (NCA)

The Engagement Manager provided Members with some background information on the NCA and their role in Northern Ireland. The Chair welcomed Craig Naylor, Deputy Director of Investigations (NCA) and Gerry McLean, NCA's Head of Investigations for Scotland to the meeting.

The NCA representatives provided members with a presentation on the work of the NCA, and in particular their role in Northern Ireland, including;

- The location of NCA sites;
- NCA priorities;
- The international reach of the NCA and how this benefits Northern Ireland;
- The Northern Ireland NCA team (140 officers) and their work in Operations, Intelligence, Asset Denial and legal and financial roles;
- The benefits of partnership working in relation to national and international threats to security and the Northern Ireland Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) ;

- Some of the successes in Northern Ireland; and
- The future ambitions for NCA in Northern Ireland.

The Chair thanked the NCA representatives for their presentations and opened the floor for Member comments and questions.

Members discussed:

- Whether there has been any developments to give NCA the same legislative powers as the Criminal Investigations Bureau (CIB);
- Whether the high number of sites in England compared to other regions was a strategic decision;
- Whether the NCA would see themselves as part of the Civil Recovery Group;
- Whether the NCA has any role in relation to those individuals that dominate communities in relation to control;
- Questioned whether NCA felt that they had sufficient resources given that 140 officers of the 5,000 NCA personnel represents under 3%;
- Whether there is an agreed approach of their work with the PSNI or if any tensions exist;
- Acknowledged that there is a potential for a higher risk level due to Brexit; and
- Whether there are gaps in legislation which would ensure that institutions such as banks submit “Suspicious Activity Reports” following any substantial cash transaction.

The NCA representatives provided the following responses:

- NCA lawyers have briefed the Assembly on what powers they are seeking, in line with the CIB and hope that these will come into effect in 2021;
- The establishment of the NCA has a complex background where operational sites were inherited rather than strategically chosen. There are plans to reduce bases in England and a hope that NCA would potentially be included in a Crime Centre in Northern Ireland;

- NCA would regard their role in relation to the Civil Recovery Group as complementary or through a partnership;
- There would be no expectation that NCA officers would be involved in street patrols with PSNI officers, rather their role focuses on interrupting or stopping the wealth/power basis which impacts their influence on young people in their areas;
- Resources are limited and whilst thankful for the amount paid by the PSNI, it is a historical figure which does not reflect pay rises or increases in the cost of living. The NCA has focused on growing its capabilities in NI;
- The relationship with the PSNI is good on operations, however, more could be done with more resources. Collaboration is key to ensuring that you are not only looking after your own priorities;
- The financial contribution by PSNI gives NI access to the international network which allows interruption to operations before they even come to Northern Ireland;
- Legislation does not impact the responsibilities of organisations to report substantial bank transactions, there is a shortage of organisations that can inspect and ensure that such institutions are taking appropriate actions – this is recognised as an area of weakness.

The Chair thanked the NCA representatives for their attendance and presentation and for the work they do in Northern Ireland and NCA left the meeting.

6.3 PCSP Reconstitution – Impartial Assessor’s report

The Partnership Manager introduced this item and provided members with an overview of the role and responsibilities of the Impartial Assessor, details on the work he carried out and a summary of the 12 recommendations raised within the report.

It was explained that the majority of recommendations were focused on continual improvement of the process going forward, however, she drew Members attention to two strategic recommendations, namely; that Council HR departments should be responsible for implementing Stage 2 for the next reconstitution process, and that DoJ should conduct a full review of the Code of Practice in light of the issues raised around Stage 3 to ensure that the process is legally robust.

Members agreed to recommend that the Board approves the report for publication onto the Board's website.

It was:-

AGREED

- The report will be presented to the Board at their next meeting with a recommendation for approval for publishing on the Board's website. **(AP4)**

6.4 Independent Custody Visitor Scheme update

The Engagement Manager provided Members with an update on the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Recruitment Campaign 2019/20.

Members discussed:

- The reach of the recruitment campaign and the possibility of wider promotion including within the health sector for future campaigns; and
- The number of applicants compared to the number interviewed.

It was:-

AGREED

- To note the Independent Custody Visiting Scheme Recruitment Campaign 2019/20 update. **NOTED**

6.5 Engagement Strategy – revised timeline

The Engagement Manager provided an update on the Engagement Strategy 2020-23: Annual Programme of Work and provided details on amendments made to the Programme in line with ongoing restrictions and also events and engagement that has taken place.

Members discussed:

- The activities outlined in the Annual Programme of Work and the need to have more inclusive engagement across all Section 75 groups;
- The lack of engagement across certain sectors in particular faith based groups, sporting organisations and groups representing people with disabilities including the deaf and blind;
- The need to set up a structured approach to engaging with Section 75 groups and requested that webinars are considered for engagement purposes; and
- The possibility of holding a themed online event in the New Year focussed on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

It was:-

AGREED

- To update the Annual Programme of Work to reflect a more inclusive list of engagement activities, in particular relating to Key Stakeholder meetings held with the Board Chair; **(AP5)**
- Consider the use of webinars for engagement and provide Members with details of those arranged; **(AP6)** and
- Progress holding a themed online meeting for community groups in the New Year with a possible focus on Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking. **(AP7)**

6.6 PCSP Review – Commissioning note

The Partnership Manager introduced this item and advised Members that the Commissioning Note was being provided at this meeting to ensure that the Committee had seen all documents relating to the review. It was also explained that comments received at the October Committee meeting have already been factored into the scoping paper and that this would come to the Partnership Committee for feedback and agreement before it goes to Joint Committee.

Members provided the following comments:

- Concerns were raised over the wording of Objective 8 and members have requested that this objective is removed from the review;
- The importance of any scoping paper/Terms of Reference coming for Committee consideration before it goes to Joint Committee as it cannot be mandated by officials;
- The importance of ensuring that the review adopts a bottom up approach;
- The need for more work in enhancing the contribution of Designated Organisations to ensure a true partnership approach to addressing local issues;
- The need to ensure that PCSPs are not a wing of the Council; and
- The need to reaffirm how Board officials and Members operate against DoJ expectations.

The Partnership Manager advised that the scoping paper was still under development and that it will be brought to the Committee for comment and agreement before it goes to Joint Committee. Members were requested to submit any further general comments to the Partnership Manager who would ensure these are incorporated in the draft document which will be brought to Committee when fully drafted.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

NONE

8. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

NONE

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

NONE

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 17 December 2020.

(Meeting closed at 12.45 PM).

PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE

NOVEMBER 2020


Chairperson