

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY  
20 MAY 2021 AT 14:00 on Zoom.**

**PRESENT:**

- Mrs Dolores Kelly (Chair)
- Mr Michael Atkinson
- Ms Liz Kimmins
- Mr Tom Buchanan
- Mr Mervyn Storey
- Mrs Joanne Bunting
- Mrs Janet Gray
- Mr Seán Lynch
- Ms Carmel McKinney
- Mr John Blair
- (2) Mr Tom Frawley - Ex Officio

**PSNI:**

- (1) DCC Hamilton
- T/ACC Singleton
- Ms L Jeapes, PSNI Staff Member

**OFFICIALS IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

- Mrs Amanda Stewart, CEO
- Mrs Dympna Thornton, Director of Partnership
- 4 Board Officials

- (1) Present only for Item 6.1
- (2) Present only for Item 6.4

## 1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received.

## 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 22 April 2021.

It was:-

### **RESOLVED:-**

- That the draft minutes of Partnership Committee meetings held on the 22 April 2021 be approved.

## 4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG:

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

**AP23.1** Letter issued requesting further update on PSNI's Community Relations Taskforce. Response included at item 5.2 of this meeting agenda. Following additional information requested by a Member following the April meeting, a further letter requesting information on a number of other matters was issued to PSNI on 10 May 2021 and is also included at agenda item 5.2. Director of Partnership will share the PSNI response when it is received. Members agreed that Action 23.1 could be closed. **NOTED**

## 5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

The Chair welcomed all Members to the meeting and wished to record the Member's condolences to Committee Member Seán Lynch on the recent passing of his Brother. The Chair advised that 2 items of correspondence

would be included under this agenda item and invited the Director of Partnership to provide further details.

### **5.1 Response from PSNI re: Update to PSNI Strategic Communications and Engagement Strategy**

The Director of Partnership provided members with the PSNI response of 27th April 2021 and referred Members to the updated version of the Communications and Engagement Strategy provided by PSNI. **NOTED**

### **5.2 Letter from Chair to PSNI re: request for information from April meeting**

The Director of Partnership informed Members that a letter has issued from the Chair to T/ACC Singleton requesting some further information on the following:

- The Community Curator Programme,
  - An organisational chart for the Crime Prevention and Early Intervention Branch
  - Information on the small grant programme distributed in 2020/21
  - Update on Repeat Victimisation pilot in Lisburn/West Belfast
- Members in due course.

Members were advised that PSNI's response will be shared with Members when it becomes available. **NOTED**

## **6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Report on Policing Plan Measure 2.1.1 – Confidence in Policing**

An official from the Board's Police Performance Directorate introduced the item and provided an overview of the paper provided to Members which included the PSNI's report on the Policing Plan Measure 2.1.1 and Board official's analysis. In providing this, she highlighted a number of areas which Members may wish to consider when discussing the progress report with PSNI representatives.

The Chair welcomed the Deputy Chief Constable and T/ACC Singleton to the meeting. In presenting the measure report T/ACC Singleton made the following points:

- Expressed frustration at the nature of this report card, having hoped that data from the NI Community Safety survey might have been available to support it, however he went on to advise that the last survey showed that two thirds of respondents were confident in policing;
- PSNI suggested that Members consider this update in terms of "So what, Why, and Now What"
- PSNI have approved a supplemental social media survey to improve their understanding of confidence levels, help identify why people may not feel safe and to assist in improving confidence;
- PSNI advised that similar surveys are used by other Police Services, and explained that the questions asked in the survey will align with a number of Policing Plan measures.
- The role of the Independent Advisory Group (IAG) was considered;
- Acknowledgement of the threat to public confidence in policing which has become amplified in the last 6 months; and
- PSNI were keen to explain that the Community Relations Task Force (CRTF) does not have a single area of focus but is a recalibration of PSNI's engagement efforts which will be more fully explained by PSNI at the next Board meeting.

Members discussed:

- The unique environment in which police operate in NI and asked about the role of District Engagement Officers;
- How PSNI use IAGs to ensure enhanced confidence in policing and were keen to understand membership of IAGs;
- The social media survey and the timeframes within which it will operate;

- Reference groups – which were previously operated by the NIPB and the role which Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) play in engagement and confidence building, particularly in the Protestant/Unionist/Loyalist (PUL) Community;
- How PSNI are seeking to understand and address the levels of confidence of officers within its ranks;
- The Rape Crime Victim survey and how it might inform PSNI about confidence in policing;
- What NPTs are doing to ensure that PSNI are seen to be visible and accessible, and
- The damage caused to confidence in policing by the recent HMIC Report and the role that PCSPs might play in addressing this.

In addressing Member's comments, PSNI provided the following comments:

- The District Engagement Officers oversee delivery of Neighbourhood Policing and noted that need to ensure that communities are not over-policed and under-protected;
- It is important that PSNI recognise that there are a range of "communities of interest", such as the business community, or farming community, and that communities are not just geographically-based. It was also acknowledged that equal policing should be delivered to all communities, and that PSNI need to engage in areas where engagement may currently be limited.
- Recognition that an IAG is one of a number of options for engagement by PSNI;
- Advice from IAGs can assist in PSNI decision making but it is just one part of broader decision making arrangements;
- Membership of IAGs at present is not made public however, PSNI will consider this;
- A PSNI staff member joined the meeting and provided further detail regarding the social media survey, indicating that it will run on a

quarterly basis, and outlined its methodology confirming that the survey will be anonymous;

- PSNI acknowledged the critical role that Neighbourhood Policing Teams play in enhancing community engagement and confidence;
- PSNI acknowledged that while engagement with NPT officers at a local level remains intact, public confidence with those at a strategic level in PSNI has experienced difficulties, however PSNI advise that they want to engage and are hopeful that communities will be willing to do so.
- PSNI recognise and acknowledge that the officers and staff are the organisation's greatest asset. The Chief Constable has had constructive engagement with PSNI Staff Associations, with the PSNI Service Executive Team keen to expand dialogue within the organisation;
- Recognition of the pattern of mental health issues amongst PSNI Officers, acknowledging that there is a higher level of mental health illness relative to other Police Services or members of the public;
- It is important that information from surveys (such as the Rape Crime Victim survey) is supported by other complementary data which can be used to understand if victims are confident in policing;
- Visibility is of vital importance in building confidence, and specific performance measures to assess visibility are now contained in Outcome Three of the Policing Plan;
- Acknowledgement of the role which PCSPs can play in rebuilding confidence and awareness of strong local platforms in some areas which allow for engagement with a wider range of groups across the community.

The Chair thanked the PSNI representatives for attending the meeting.

## 6.2 Update on PCSP Action Plans 2021/22

The Partnership Manager provided Members with a summary of the PCSP Action Plans for the 2021/22 implementation year which included the thematic focus and associated projects and initiatives and asked that Members note:

- Ten action plans have been reviewed and approved with Letters of Offer now issued;
- Belfast PCSP Action Plan is yet to be approved, with further information on performance measurements and clarification required;
- Q1 remains a challenge, however, this is normally a time for procurement and processing small grant programmes;
- PCSPs are moving towards the more traditional delivery methods of programmes which will include key engagement events and face to face working;
- Notwithstanding this, a number of projects have been delivered in novel ways, due to pandemic restrictions. Examples were cited, such as PCSPs working with partners to produce educational videos for particular projects;
- Challenges have been evident in delivering projects and initiatives outcomes under Strategic Priority 3, due to limited opportunities for PSNI to engage , however the 2021/22 Action Plans demonstrate the intention to return to projects which will demonstrate alignment with this Strategic Priority, and
- In terms of proposed financial spend across PCSPs, fear of crime and crime prevention for vulnerable people represents the largest expenditure with ASB, youth engagement, drugs and alcohol initiatives and domestic and sexual violence projects also reflecting large allocation of spend. **NOTED**

### 6.3 Independent Custody Visiting (ICV) Annual Report 2020/21

The Partnership Manager provided an overview of the ICV Annual Report which includes statistics and information regarding visits during lockdown and requested that Members approve the report for inclusion at the Board meeting in June when approval will be sought to publish the report on the Board's website. Members were happy to recommend to the Board that the report be approved for publishing.

It was:-

#### **AGREED**

- Board officials will publish the report following approval from Board Members at the June Board meeting **(AP1)**.

### 6.4 Committee Review – overview paper and conclusions

The Board's Vice Chair joined the meeting and provided Members with an update on responses given by Partnership Committee Members to the online committee effectiveness review.

He outlined some comments on the responses provided for each of the domains of the review. There were a number of useful points raised by responders which the Vice Chair indicated might be helpful for the Committee to consider. He also explained that following this exercise, this work would move into its second / final phase.

Members discussed:

- Next steps and the Board's role in approving any recommendations from this work;
- Consideration of establishing objectives for the Committee;



The Vice Chair replied stating that:

- The Board will make decisions in respect of any recommendations and invited a Member to consider drafting exemplar objectives for the Committee that could be discussed at the Board away-day; and
- Advised that this piece of work will receive further attention at the Board away day in July. **NOTED**

### **6.5 Policing with the Community (PwC) Evaluation work – update on meeting with Central Procurement Division (CPD)**

The Chair introduced this item and indicated that following the meeting with Central Procurement Directorate (CPD), as outlined in Member's papers, the advice provided by CPD had demonstrated that progressing this proposal would be difficult.

Members discussed:

- Concerns around timescales;
- Advice given by CPD;
- A need to be cautious; and
- Noted the views of CPD were very helpful.

Members agreed not to progress with this proposal. **NOTED**

## **7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

- 7.1** The Director of Partnership provided Members with a response from PSNI to the question which Members submitted at the April Committee meeting. Members were reminded that a copy of PSNI's response was previously provided to Members at the May Board meeting. **NOTED**

## **8. Communications Issues/Opportunities**

### **8.1 NONE**

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**9.1 NONE**

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 17th June 2021 at 2pm.

(Meeting closed at 4pm)

**PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE**

**MAY 2021**

*Donna Kelly*  
Chairperson