

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY  
21 JANUARY 2021 AT 10:00am on Zoom.**

**PRESENT:**

- Mrs Dolores Kelly (Chair)
- Mr Michael Atkinson
- Ms Liz Kimmins
- Mr Tom Buchanan
- Mr Mervyn Storey
- Mr Mike Nesbitt
- Mrs Janet Gray
- Mr Sean Lynch

Mr Tom Frawley (Ex Officio)

**PSNI:**

- (1) ACC Todd
- (1) Supt Kelly Moore
  
- (2) T/ACC Roberts
- (2) Chief Supt Sam Donaldson

**OFFICIALS IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

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

- (1) Present only for Item 6.1
- (2) Present only for Item 6.2

## **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Ms Carmel McKinney and the Chair wished to note Members' condolences to Carmel on the recent loss of her father.

## **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 17 December 2020.

It was:-

### **RESOLVED:-**

- That the draft minutes of Partnership Committee meetings held on the 17 December 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 – Board officials have not yet received response from Crown Solicitors Office, but will advise Members when this is received.

Action Point 18.5- Consultation with Members on the Annual Programme of Work associated with the Engagement Strategy is continuing.

Action Point 18.6- The Director of Partnership advised that this action links to AP 19.2, and advised that online engagement events are planned, starting in February 2021. Members agreed that these actions could be closed.

Action Point 19.1- Independent Review Commission (IRC) Commissioners will attend Partnership Committee in February 2021, and a copy of the Third Report of the Commission, issued in November 2020, will be provided to Members.

Action Point 19.4 – PSNI have confirmed that a presentation to the Committee on the PSNI's Digital Strategy will not be available until early Spring 2021.

Board officials will contact PSNI to arrange this presentation.

It was:-

**AGREED**

- More detail is required when completing the action log to allow clarity for Members **(AP1)**

## **5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS**

The Chair welcomed the Board's Vice-Chair to the meeting and advised members that two items of correspondence would be included under this agenda item and invited the Director of Partnership to provide further details.

### **5.1 Letter from Board to DOJ re: Legislation impacting speed awareness fees**

The Director of Partnership provided an update and reminded Members of the proposed legislation amendment in relation to speed awareness fees. DOJ are currently liaising with the Home Office regarding this legislation.

**NOTED**

### **5.2 Response letter from Chair to the North West Migrants Forum**

The Director of Partnership provided Members with an update on the response letter and requested that Members note that a response was issued to this group advising that further update can be provided when the Board have had the opportunity to discuss the findings of the OPONI Report and the PSNI response to the Board's Review with the Chief Constable.

**NOTED**

## 6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

### 6.1 Policing Plan Measure 3.1.1 – Local Policing Review

The Director of Partnership presented the paper to Members and provided an overview of the plan and related timelines. Members noted the absence of some reports mentioned in the plan e.g. the New Zealand visit report and also questioned the oversight role implied for the Community Safety Board (CSB).

The Chair welcomed ACC Alan Todd and Superintendent Kelly Moore to the meeting. In presenting ACC Todd made the following points:

- The team under his leadership are in the process of following up all actions;
- Fifteen actions are noted in the plan currently completed;
- Accepted that progress should have been better but appreciates there have been a number of changes in leadership of the plan;
- Noted that the current pandemic has caused a level of distraction in terms of leadership to progress actions;
- Accepted current action plan lacks focus on impact;
- Advised that there will be a focus with the new team to critically look at the timelines and also appropriateness of the actions;
- Proposed that Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) are maintained and that shift patterns give sufficient coverage (16 hours per day); and
- Emphasised the need to ensure Visibility, Accessibility and Responsiveness:

#### **Visibility**

- A focus on the 400 NPT Officers;
- Ensure that time is spent on the areas needed; and
- Increase liveried vehicles to create more visibility

### **Accessibility**

- Advised that NPT Officers details are now online; and
- Increased social media visibility is ongoing.

### **Responsiveness**

- Work is continuing to enhance training programmes;
- More work required on call allocation policy;
- A need for local teams to solve local problems; and
- It is important that NPTs do not lose sight of strategic level issues.

### **Members discussed:**

- Whether officer numbers are sufficient specifically to cover an area with a wide geographical spread;
- Questioned whether schools/universities are engaging with PSNI;
- Questioned the response time noted in the 101 report as experience would suggest that the process is very protracted before getting through to speak with an operator;
- Raised concerns regarding the proposed budget for 2021/22 and queried whether this would affect current numbers of NPT Officers;
- Referred to the discussion paper provided an Annex C and questioned whether measures being developed at Outcome 3 of the Policing Plan need amended;
- Noted that 24 of the 400 NPT Officers are still required and questioned where they will be placed;
- Noted that Members have not had sight of the report on New Zealand visit and requested that this be provided;
- Questioned the particular skills sought for NPT officers;
- Questioned how COVID had impacted on training;
- Discussed PCSOs in terms of the opportunity to pilot volunteer police officers;
- Raised concerns around some of the actions proposed for closure;

- Questioned whether EU exit money has been approved and whether it would ease budget pressures; and
- Questioned implied oversight by the Community Safety Board under action 3.3 of the update provided for the Local Policing Review.

In addressing Member's comments, ACC Todd provided the following comments:

- Acknowledged that the NPT structure may need revisited/rebalanced;
- This needs to be carried out in the context of significant budget cuts;
- Advised that there is currently a wide reach to schools but that a more strategic approach may be helpful;
- Advised that the 101 service is amongst the best in the UK but PSNI are working with NI Direct to further develop the service;
- The discussion paper provided at Annex C gives a level of focus but there are no requirements to re-write the Policing Plan Outcomes;
- In relation to the 24 outstanding NPT officers there are 3 or 4 districts currently short and will be considered;
- Agreed to send Members the report on the visit to New Zealand;
- Advised that traditionally NPT officers would have good people and problem solving skills but enhanced skills are now required to enable them to manage repeat offenders and gather intelligence without losing engagement skills;
- In relation to the impact of COVID on training, it has been important to maintain essential training e.g. firearms, however, there is a short-term suspension on other non-essential training at the college and there has been a marked increase in virtual training provision,
- The Volunteering Strand of the Local Policing Review may benefit from further consideration in order to widen the avenue of opportunity to volunteering.
- Further consideration of the timelines, and of re-opening some of the actions which PSNI had noted as closed in their supporting paper;

- Clearer definition in respect of certain Local Policing Review Actions would assist PSNI.
- Advised that decisions on the EU exit money are currently being taken however, a flat line budget presents immediate pressures in the region of £15m.

It was:-

**AGREED**

- ACC Todd will share the NZ visit report with Members **(AP2)**; and
- Members to provide any comments on the timelines to the Director of Partnership in advance of PSNI providing a further update **(AP3)**

The Chair thanked the PSNI representatives for attending the meeting.

## **6.2 Presentation on PSNI Operational Support Department**

The Director of Partnership introduced the item and welcomed T/ACC Roberts and Chief Supt Donaldson to the meeting. T/ACC Roberts provided members with an overview on the Operational Support Department (OSD).

Members made the following comments:

- Whether the recent data breach has impacted any legacy cases;
- Requested more detail on the Tactical Training Unit/Security Branch;
- Noted an issue in relation to an image used in the video which is largely out of date and advised that it is very misleading;
- Questioned whether Brexit has impacted EU arrest warrants;
- Expressed concerns regarding the impact of a £30 magazine fee and the apparent long delays in firearms licence renewals including variations;
- Questioned how the specialist Search and Rescue Unit works with the Community Rescue Service (CRS);

- Questioned whether budget pressures will impact on 2020/21 Roads Policing priorities;
- Questioned whether the Close Protection Review has been published and the cost of the review;
- Questioned the role of the Parades Commission Liaison Officer (PCLO) and their interaction and whether the Parades Commission take on board advice given;
- Questioned the percentage of forensic work being outsourced and the related costs; and
- Queried whether the impact of COVID has caused additional work related stress.

In addressing Member's comments, T/ACC Roberts and Chief Supt Donaldson provided the following comments:

- Advised that, at this point, it is not believed that the PSNI have been impacted by the data breach but this is yet to be fully established and confirmed;
- Noted that there is a wider issue in relation to the legislation yet to be enacted as this puts onus on PSNI regarding record retention;
- Advised on the different levels of tactical responses including the management and tactical support levels;
- Advised that there is less of a need for TSGs for riots/protests with work now focused mainly on searches;
- Confirmed that the video provided will be edited to remove the referenced image;
- Advised that it is their understanding that previous EU arrest warrants are live but that these maybe impacted in future and noted that they continue to maintain a close working relationship with An Garda Siochana;
- Recognised firearms issue raised by Members advising that 4000 applications are received monthly and the team are trying to automate the processes;



- Advised that PSNI would traditionally have led search and rescue 15 years ago, however, PSNI have moved to a more co-ordinating role and the service could not be provided without the CRS;
- Advised that roads policing nationally is an area which has lacked investment;
- HMI report on roads policing highlights issues that don't necessarily relate to traffic offences e.g. criminal movement on roads networks;
- There is a need to focus on the right areas and embed these;
- Advised that the NICOP Committee assesses the need for close protection and it has been going through a 4 year process of review which is coming to an end. This process gives individuals the right to appeal to the Secretary of State on decisions taken. It was advised that the next meeting in early February should be the end of the review process, however, there is a Judicial Review also pending by one of the Principals;
- Advised that they do not currently have the cost of this review but will provide this for Members;
- Advised in relation to the role of the PCLO which has allowed positive interaction with the Parades Commission and noted that briefings provided are factual and do not make suggestions to assist the Parades Commission in decision making;
- In relation to forensics, all crime scene investigations are in-house apart from any complex elements. PSNI have a contract with the Forensic Science NI (FSNI) for crime scene forensic examination work and this contract is reviewed annually – costs can be provided to Members; and
- PSNI are not seeing higher levels of stress related absence due to COVID, however, front line police are at a greater risk of needing to self-isolate.

In relation to the NICOP Review, the Board CEO advised that the Resources Committee had previously written to Sir Jonathan Stephens, Permanent Secretary,

NIO who had confirmed costs, and this will be shared with Members and T/ACC Roberts.

It was:-

**AGREED**

- PSNI to provide the annual cost of the FSNI contract **(AP4)**;  
and
- Correspondence relating to NICOP Review and related costs will be sent to Members and T/ACC Roberts **(AP5)**.

### **6.3 Draft PCSP Annual Effectiveness Report 2019/20**

The Partnership Manager presented the paper which provided an overview of the draft PCSP Annual Effectiveness Report 2019/20 and asked for Members feedback and comments which would be incorporated into the report in advance of Joint Committee consideration and approval.

She advised that COVID had limited impact on the work of PCSPs during this reporting period and she highlighted some of the key achievements across the thematic crime areas.

Members agreed that the report contained good information and requested that the Executive Summary is refined to draw out where PCSPs appear to be more or less effective against some of the regional crime statistics.

Members also suggested a small number of other minor amendments and were requested to email these through to the Partnership Manager who would provide a track changed version of the report for the February Board meeting. This would enable a final draft to go to Joint Committee for approval on a timely basis to allow publication.

It was:-

**AGREED**

- Members should send comments/suggestions to the Partnership Manager to allow a track changed version to go to the February Board meeting **(AP6)**

#### **6.4 Police Property Fund**

The Partnership Manager provided Members with an update on the Police Property Fund and the draft Standards of Condition Grant document, seeking Members feedback. She also asked Members to note that the Chair and Vice Chair of the Committee took the decision to postpone the launch date of the fund due to the ongoing COVID restrictions. A new launch date will be set when appropriate.

Members discussed:

- Resources for managing some of the requirements within the Standard Conditions of Grant;
- The possibility of extending the application deadline if needed;
- Queried whether further detail is required in relation to project reporting;
- Provision of online seminars for assisting with the application process; and
- NIPB branding should be on all documentation for the fund.

In addressing Members comments the Partnership Manager provided the following:

- Resources will be in place to ensure appropriate governance is managed;
- There will be an option to extend the application deadline based on the restrictions still in place at the time of launch;

- Webinars are being developed to provide support to applicants and will be available on the Board's website;
- Project reporting requirements are included in the Guidance for Applicants and also in the Standard Conditions of Grant. Reporting milestones will be specific to each project and will be agreed as part of pre-contracting and included in their Letter of Offer; and
- The requirement to include the Board's logo on all project material is included as a requirement within the Standard Conditions of Grant.

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

Three questions were proposed to be asked of the Chief Constable relating to the following:

- Seeking assurance from the Chief Constable on his commitment to retaining NPTs in light of budget announcements
- The potential for PCSOs / Special Constables to be introduced in PSNI
- The use of PTR/POPT for operational duties, as well as the numbers of such officers and the possibility of enhancing their capacity and capability.

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

The Communications Manager suggested that a report should go to the public on the progress of the Local Policing Review and an Infographic highlighting some of the Annual Effectiveness Report 2019/20 achievements will be developed for use as part of the publication of the report.

**AGREED**

## **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

**9.1** The Director of Partnership provided Members with an update on the request for the Board's Internal Audit to carry out an audit to seek assurance that the use of PCSP funds by Belfast City Council will deliver against PCSP Strategic Priority 3 "To Support Community Confidence in Policing".

Members will receive further update when the outcome of the audit is known.

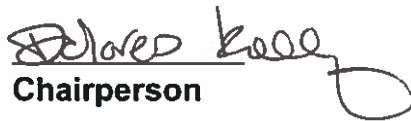
**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The date of the next meeting was agreed as 18 February 2021.

(Meeting closed at 12:00 Noon)

**PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE**

**JANUARY 2021**

  
Chairperson