

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY
25 JANUARY 2024 AT 2PM IN CONFERENCE ROOM JAMES HOUSE.**

PRESENT:

Mr John Blair MLA (Chair)
Mr Mukesh Sharma (Vice Chair)
Mr Les Allamby
Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
(6) Dr Kate Laverty
(7) Mr Mark H Durkan MLA
Dr Janet Gray
Mr Peter Osborne
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

(8) Mr Edgar Jardine (Board Vice Chair)

**POLICE SERVICE
OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN
ATTENDANCE:**

(1) Mr Bobby Singleton, Assistant Chief Constable
Local Policing
(2) Mr Ryan Henderson, T/Assistant Chief Constable
(3) Superintendent Reid
(4) Superintendent Gibson
(5) Superintendent Haslett
Two PSNI Officials
Adele Browne TPPT Programme Director (TEO)
Claire Hazelden TPPT Research Analyst (TEO)

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Sarah Reid, T/Director of Partnership
Four Board Officials

- (1) Items 6.1, 6.2 & 6.3
- (2)(3) Item 6.1 only
- (4) Item 6.2 only
- (5) Item 6.3 only
- (6) Left at 16.00pm
- (7) Left at 17.08pm
- (8) Left at 17.10pm

The Partnership Committee Chair welcomed all Members to the Committee. The Chair also welcomed the Vice Chair of the Board, Edgar Jardine.

The Chair started by extending condolences to Les on behalf of the Partnership Committee, on his recent family bereavement.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies received from Mrs Joanne Bunting MLA and Mr Gerry Kelly MLA

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

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

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 16 NOVEMBER 2023

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 16th November 2023.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 16th November 2023 be approved.

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG

The Committee **NOTED** the updates and correspondence detailed within the Action Log and the related verbal overview provided by the T/Partnership Director.

It was agreed that the following actions would close as they had been implemented:

- Action Points 1,2,3,4 and 5 from the meeting in November 2023.

4.1 Response from PSNI re: Road deaths presentation invitation

Members were asked to note the detailed response and supporting data from PSNI in relation to road deaths and the ongoing PSNI initiatives to tackle this issue.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

4.2 Letter to PSNI re: MATT statistics/options paper

Members were asked to note the options paper provided by PSNI on the future of MATT (Multi Agency Triage Team) and some detailed statistics from PSNI showing the wider mental health and vulnerability issues that PSNI are dealing with daily.

Members discussed:

- Progress in considering the 'Right Care, Right Person' approach.
- How the absence of key agencies on the MATT has greatly impacted on its delivery.
- The benefit of having a wider discussion with PSNI at a future Committee meeting which focuses on the wider mental health issues and impact this is having on officer resources,
- That it would be useful that this briefing included reference to the Cawdery case as the inquest had a number of recommendations that could be helpful.

4.3 Letter to Chair of Performance Committee – PCSP recommendations in 15th Annual Report of Reviewer of Security & Justice

Members were asked to note the correspondence issued to Performance Committee Chair.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.1 Email notification on ASB Legislative Review consultation

Members were asked to note the email notification and that a paper in relation to this will be discussed under agenda item 6.5.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

5.2 PSNI Custody Update

Members were asked to note the update officially advising of the adjustments to custody provision in relation to the Waterside, Coleraine and Banbridge suites.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Policing Plan Measures – 2.2.1 Satisfaction

A Board Official provided an analysis of the PSNI reporting in relation to Performance Plan Measures of 2.2.1 specific to Victim and Service User Satisfaction.

The paper included **Annex A** – PSNI Report Card Measure Outcome 2 - We Have Confidence in Policing.

Members were advised that the PSNI victim satisfaction survey shows satisfaction with PSNI has decreased in all 4 questions from the previous year. Victim satisfaction in their contact with PSNI has decreased 5% in the latest figures, which represents the lowest figure reported since 2018/19. 55% of victims very satisfied/satisfied with the response from the PSNI, a 4% decrease from 2022. Regarding service user satisfaction with the PSNI response, the Survey states 68% of service users were very satisfied/satisfied with the response from the PSNI, this has decreased by 1%. There has been an increase in complaints and allegations received by the Police Ombudsman between April and September 2023, when compared with the same period in 2022.

A significant amount of work has taken place in recent months regarding attempts to improve Victims Satisfaction and implementing the Victims Charter and it is hoped that continued focus on victim updates can help improve overall victim satisfaction.

The Chair welcomed PSNI to the meeting.

ACC Singleton and colleagues provided Members with an analysis of item 6.1 which included:

- That in the operational sense PSNI carry the bulk of the workload in supporting victims,
- That PSNI have discussions with the Victims Commissioner regarding long term policy and victim developments,
- The importance of victims having a voice and that their experiences are reflected,

- That there was a tendency on occasions to underreport crime such as Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB),
- That figures were not being documented accurately,
- The disconnect between different departments and the need for this to be rectified,
- The need to record information correctly,
- That victims are given access to the Victims Charter,
- How PSNI results compare to the rest of Great Britain,
- The need for all departments to be intrinsically linked to all aspects of victim satisfaction,
- How more accurate recording helps identify the victim and gets them the appropriate help they require,
- The impact that budget pressures and resources have on the statistics,
- The ongoing pilot to make process quicker and improve satisfaction,
- The use of Community Resolution Notice's (CRN's) as prosecution may not always be an option,
- The launch of an online reporting hub portal where crimes will be triaged and allocated as normal and will allow victims access to ongoing updates,
- The NI Victim and Witness Survey, the decline in Victim support referrals and the challenges being faced due to resourcing issues.

Following the presentation by PSNI, Members discussed:

- That despite the figures comparing favourably against other forces in Great Britain, whether the current downward trajectory might result in figures eventually meeting.
- Whether there are measures being put in place to ensure an upward trajectory in relation to victim/witness updates.

- The measures being put in place to improve victim and witness updates within specified timeframes and any reasons why updates are not being carried out.
- Appreciation of the challenges around NPT numbers and how this is potentially impacting victim update feedback.
- Whether the free text service is proving valuable and if any patterns have emerged,
- The title of Operation AGNOSIA and if this should be renamed,
- If statistics can be provided breaking down the demographics of those not satisfied,

PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- With 353 fewer officers in local policing, fewer officers are carrying greater workloads.
- Work is ongoing to improve victim/witness updates, including examination of datasets which are contradictory to feedback, changing officers' mindsets to reinforce that updates are for the benefit of the victim and not to comply with the Victim's Charter.
- The benefits of the text service for victim response and how anonymity has been removed to ensure that positive and negative feedback can be given to officers.
- How this can be used positively to boost officers' moral as they feel underappreciated and undervalued.
- That focusing on percentages and figures does not detract from the fact that you are dealing with human beings and the importance of the process.
- The need for timely and informative updates for victims.
- The training that is being provided to ensure uniformity for victims.
- That PSNI have linked in with the Victims Commissioner and the use of the multi-agency support hub.

- There are known occasions where officers feel that their work has concluded, and they don't need to update victims/witnesses.
- The agreement that Operation AGNOSIA will be renamed.
- The various issues surrounding why victims may not be contacted such as how busy officers are after a certain time of the evening and that people may not necessarily answer unknown numbers and let them go to voicemail.
- The increase in complaints in 9 out of the 11 Council areas are because of a number of potential factors, including, any increases in stop and search or specific incidents happening in areas. Work is ongoing in relation to understanding the stats around repeat complainants.

Chair thanked PSNI for the presentation.

6.2 PSNI update on Children & Young People's Strategy

Chair invited ACC Singleton and Superintendent Gibson to provide an update on PSNI's Children & Young People Strategy

Members were advised that:

- The Children & Young People's Strategy was formally launched in June 2023 and is based on five key themes,
- PSNI continue to be held to account on its delivery at the Youth Champions Forum with the next meeting being held in February 2024,
- PSNI provided an update on events that have already been held and the need to make future events more thematic over the coming year,
- The close work between PSNI and other partners and agencies to create a Young Person's Forum that will shadow the Youth Champion's Forum and will be specifically for young people,

- The Youth Champion's forum will look at how to improve relations between PSNI and young people,
- The purpose of the shadow forum and the need to ensure younger peoples' voices are respected and heard,
- The involvement of PCSP's and NPT's and the impact they could potentially have.

Following the update Members discussed:

- That the development of the proposed App should be independent from PSNI,
- The possibility of NICCY securing funding for this type of development,
- The use of social media platforms,
- Where the recruitment for young people is being advertised and the importance of not focusing on the high achievers,
- The role of the Youth Volunteer Academy,
- The need for underrepresented groups such as children with disabilities, child refugees, 'looked after' children and those involved in disability sports organisations,
- The need to include children from uniformed organisations, e.g. the Boy's Brigade.

PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- That the development of the App has not commenced due to the budget challenges, but alternative funding streams could be explored.
- Website changes can be made by in-house teams in the absence of App funding.
- The importance of ensuring that the proposed Youth Person's Forum is inclusive and representative of children and young people across Northern Ireland,

- The need to take events outside of Belfast to ensure inclusivity of all young people,
- The purpose of the Youth Person's Forum and the need to ensure that the young people feel empowered,

Chair thanked PSNI for the presentation.

6.3 PSNI update on the South Armagh Review

Chair invited ACC Singleton and Superintendent Haslett to discuss.

Superintendent Haslett presented an update regarding the remaining recommendation emanating from this Review that were assigned to the Partnership Committee to monitor.

Members **NOTED** the update and discussed several issues with PSNI including:

- Recommendation 40 - Vulnerability focus which included a low level of reporting from specific groups, what has improved, what hasn't improved and resourcing issues,
- What engagement is being developed within minority groups,
- The proposals for the Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton stations,
- The challenges and benefits of Cross Border policing,
- The requirement to be mindful of the progress and improvements made in South Armagh.

PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- How the community confidence in policing has been affected and improved,

- That Hate Crime is not as big an issue in South Armagh which accounts for the relatively low reporting figures,
- The challenges that officers are still facing and striking a balance between officer safety and providing a police presence,
- The important role of the proactive Neighbourhood Policing Teams, which has been evident in the recent news reports,
- The unsustainable levels of abstractions due to the budget challenges,
- The need for an effective and proactive stance against criminal gangs,
- The uncertain future of the number of officers which will impact on the ability to maintain a visible footprint on the ground,
- Cross Border cooperation ensures the effective working of the wider Cross Border Strategy,
- The ongoing leadership course for NPTs which Board members will be invited to attend to observe.

Members **agreed** for further updates to be incorporated into future Committee updates on the Hallmarks under Outcome 3.

Chair thanked PSNI for their attendance.

6.4 Update on Tackling Paramilitarism Programme

The Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Team (TPPT) provided Members with an update on implementation of the Executive Plan, with a particular focus on phase 2.

Following the presentation Members discussed:

- The impact of funding on the programme,

- If there has been any assessment of the normalisation of paramilitarism in some areas,
- The terminology used around Organised Crime and Paramilitarism and whether all crime in this area is necessarily paramilitary related,
- The challenges of capturing impact,
- The risk of transition funding frequently going to 'gate keepers',
- The need for PCSPs to be active in this space,
- Stats and hotspots for victims of organised crime,
- The difference between urban and rural areas.

In response, the TPPT team made the following points:

- There is scope for greater joined up working and sharing to consider the impact of the programme,
- The physical manifestation of paramilitarism was never covered under the original Executive Plan and this will be good to address when the Assembly returns,
- Terminology has always been challenging as there is a risk of giving kudos to those that shouldn't have it,
- There are real benefits in early intervention work.
- The programme does not focus on the transition of groups, it focuses on community transition,
- Some PCSPs are doing excellent work in this space, and this is to be encouraged.

Members **NOTED** the update provided and agreed that future engagement should be focused on PSNI work in this area.

Chair thanked The Tackling Paramilitarism Programme Team for their attendance.

6.5 DOJ ASB Consultation – Board letter of support

The Engagement Manager advised Members of the current consultation being undertaken by the Department of Justice (DOJ) in conjunction with the Department for Communities (DFC) on proposed legislative amendments to help tackle Anti-Social Behaviour and were asked to note the update and make a recommendation to the Board to issue the letter of acknowledgement.

It was **Agreed**:

- That after a minor suggested amendment, to recommend to the Board that they approve the issuing of the letter at Annex A of this paper. **(AP1)**

6.6 PCSP Appointment process – update on progress

The T/Director of Partnership provided Members with an update in relation to the PCSP Appointment process, including the status of applications following the second call and a recommendation to seek nominations for a Board Appointment panel at the February 2024 Board meeting. An updated Policy on the appointment stage for Committee consideration was also provided.

It was **Agreed**:

- To **recommend** to the Board that the updated Policy be approved for publication and that nominations for an appointment panel be sought at the February Board meeting. **(AP2)**

6.7 Verbal Update on Police Property Fund applications

The T/Director of Partnership advised Members that the third call for applications closed on 24th January 2024. 152 applications were received which has been the highest of the three calls. Some applications were received after the deadline. A written request will be issued to Committee Members requesting nominations for the assessment panel.

It was **Agreed**:

- Nominations for the PPF assessment panel will be sought via email following the meeting. **(AP3)**

Members **noted** the update.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

No questions were raised.

8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES

There were no communication issues or opportunities for update.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for 10am on Thursday 15 February 2024 in Grosvenor Road Station. Following on from the meeting there will be presentation on the Organised Crime Task Force with an opportunity to meet some of the team.

The meeting ended at 17.20pm

CHAIR



**PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE
JANUARY 2024**