

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 21 MARCH 2024 AT 9.30AM IN NIPB HQ, JAMES HOUSE, BELFAST.

PRESENT:

- Mr Eóin Tennyson MLA (Chair)
- Mr Mukesh Sharma (Vice Chair)
- Ms Cheryl Brownlee MLA
- Mr Cathal Boylan MLA
- (1) Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
- Mr Les Allamby
- Dr Janet Gray
- Mr Peter Osborne
- Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
- (2) Mr Mark H Durkan MLA

EX OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- (3) Assistant Chief Constable Singleton Local Policing
- (3) Chief Superintendent McDonald Head of Justice Branch
- (3) Superintendent Reid Local Policing
- (4) Chief Superintendent Donaldson Deputy Head of Operational Support
- (4) Chief Inspector Dodds Head of Road Policing
- (4) Creative Hub Manager
- (5) One PSNI Official

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Partnership
Six Board Officials

- (1) Left meeting between 10.30 to 11.00
- (2) Joined meeting at 10.18am by Zoom
- (3) Item 6.1 only
- (4) Item 6.2 only
- (5) Items 6.1 and 6.2 only

The Partnership Committee Chair welcomed all Members to the Committee and introduced himself as a recently appointed Political Board Member. The Chair also welcomed Mr Keith Buchanan MLA, Ms Cheryl Brownlee MLA, and Mr Cathal Boylan MLA as newly appointed Board Members to their first meeting of the Partnership Committee.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Kate Lavery.

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.

Three Members declared an interest in Police Property Fund applications, however noted they were not involved in the selection process.

One Member of the Police Property Fund selection panel declared a conflict with one of the applications, however advised she did not score this application and stepped out of the room during the discussion.

Members **NOTED** the declarations.

3. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 15 FEBRUARY 2024.

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 15th February 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 15th February 2024 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 Partnership Director.

It was agreed that the following actions could now be closed as they had been implemented:

- Action Point 3 from the meeting in January 2024 and Action Points 1, 2 & 4 from the meeting in February 2024.

Regarding Action Point 3 from the February 2024 meeting of the Committee, the Director of Partnership noted that Board Officials were awaiting information to be received from PSNI to enable a letter to the Department for Infrastructure to be prepared supporting a legislative change in relation to custody healthcare in PSNI. This action will therefore remain open.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.1 Neighbourhood Officer Training

Members were asked to note the letter from PSNI advising of the dates of training programmes for Neighbourhood officers which are being delivered in the Police College at Garnerville. Due to several of the dates being later this month and conflicting with the majority of Members existing Board and NI Assembly commitments, it was proposed to hold May's Partnership Committee meeting, which is scheduled for Thursday 16 May 2024, at Garnerville to enable a bespoke overview of the training to be provided to Members.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

5.2 Information on the high level of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in the Oldpark Neighbourhood area

Members were asked to note the correspondence received from PSNI advising of measures taken to address concerns regarding ASB in the Oldpark area.

Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- To write to the PSNI requesting similar information, in respect of engagement with the local communities to address ASB, for all the other neighbour areas selected as part of this measure for reporting, as well as the outcome of the review by Belfast District of antisocial behaviour across the City. **(AP1)**

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

5.3 Draft Agenda for Joint Committee on 26 March 2024

Members were asked to note the draft agenda for the Joint Committee meeting scheduled for 26 March 2024.

It was **AGREED**:

- That the minutes of the Joint Committee meeting from 26 March 2024 and the finalised PCSP action plans will be provided to Members once they are agreed and finalised. **(AP2)**

Members **NOTED** the draft agenda provided.

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Policing Plan Measure 2.1.3 – PSNI 999/101 Response Times

Prior to the PSNI representatives joining the meeting the Police Performance Monitoring Manager provided Members with a summary of the analysis of the PSNI reporting in relation to Policing Plan Measure 2.1.3 - PSNI 999/101 Response Times, including suggested discussion points.

Members were advised that this is the second opportunity this year that the Partnership Committee has had to consider Measure 2.1.3 – the levels of 999 (emergency) and 101 (priority) calls, which is a new measure added for 2023/24.

The Police Performance Monitoring Manager noted the PSNI report card provided illustrates 12 months of data from January 2023 – December 2023 and during this period, on average, the PSNI, responded to:

- 80.6% of emergency (999) calls within the Service Level Agreement (SLA); and
- 71.2% of priority (101) calls within the SLA.

The Police Performance Monitoring Manager noted when the figures provided for October - December 2022 are compared against figures for the same period in 2023, the responsiveness of PSNI does not significantly increase or decrease (very marginal increase). The Police Performance Monitoring Manager advised PSNI have the same targets as Police Services in Great Britain for emergency calls (15 mins) and priority calls (1 hour) and the PSNI's average response times in 2023 highlight that they are performing favourably when compared to other UK police services - 4th out of 18 for Emergency calls and 2nd out of 16 for Priority calls. The Police Performance Monitoring Manager noted

Northamptonshire Police Service is performing the best in the UK in relation to Emergency and Priority calls and advised a review of the data relating to calls over a rolling 365-day period indicates there has been an increase of over 44,000 calls, representing an 8.4% increase in demand within Call Management Centres.

The Chair welcomed PSNI representatives to the meeting and invited them to provide an update on Policing Plan Measure 2.1.3 - PSNI 999/101 Response Times.

ACC Singleton acknowledged that PSNI have continued to maintain performance levels and commended officers and staff for their commitment to continuing to provide a high level of service to the general public, particularly against the backdrop of the record low officer numbers and the significant budgetary and resourcing challenges currently facing PSNI.

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

- Emergency and Priority call response times have remained consistent.
- The effects budgetary pressures are having on service delivery, noting that whilst abstractions from Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPTs) have been unavoidable to minimise any impact on Emergency and Priority call handling, the impacts are felt elsewhere in the Service.
- NPT abstractions can lead to officer frustration as they do not want communities to perceive that they are not receiving the policing they deserve.
- Ongoing collaboration with the National Police Chiefs Council (NPCC) and the difficulties experienced in providing reliable comparative data.
- The findings of the recently published Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) report on Community Safety and Local Policing Arrangements in NI.

- The progress that has been made in local communities since the introduction of the Patten report and the importance of not letting abstractions have a negative impact on this work,
- That while Police Services in England, Wales and the Republic of Ireland have all had an increase in funding over the past 10-year period, PSNI remain the lowest funded. ACC Singleton thanked the Board for its continued advocacy on the matter.

Following the PSNI presentation, Members raised the following points with the PSNI team:

- That while the comparable data is not totally reliable is there any learning that can be derived from Northamptonshire Police Service to improve call handling figures,
- The effectiveness of the Interactive Voice Response System,
- That while the anomaly in January's figures was due to severe weather conditions was that increase a one-off or is it recurring/how do the statistics for February compare,
- The resourcing pressures of other statutory departments and agencies compounding PSNI's resourcing challenges in that in the absence of assistance from other services the general public contact PSNI as a last resort, thus increasing the volume of calls being received,
- If the most effective use is being made of PSNI resources,
- The level of direct engagement with other UK Police Services and sharing best practice,
- If there has been any trend analysis carried out in relation to the increase of 8.4% in call demand,
- The importance of community policing in rural areas and the detrimental impact the reduction of the services carried out by Neighbourhood Policing Teams could have in these communities,

- The percentage of emergency calls that are resolved without deployment of officers,
- If the 101-call time experience is effective and if it is having a positive impact on the volume of 999 calls received;
- If the Service Level Agreement is the UK model and if there is any flexibility to adapt it for Northern Ireland,
- If social media platforms are being used for reporting crime and if that is having any impact on the volumes of 999 or 101 calls and what demographic uses this method of reporting,
- Definitions of emergency (999) and priority (101) calls and consideration to be given to a communications plan to raise awareness of what constitutes an emergency and also to highlight the online reporting system for non-emergency incidents,
- It was suggested that the CJINI Chief Inspector be invited to attend a future meeting of the Committee to discuss the recently published CJINI report on Community Safety and Local Policing Arrangements in Northern Ireland.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED**:

- That an invitation be issued to the CJINI Chief Inspector to attend a future meeting to discuss the recently published CJINI report on Community Safety and Local Policing Arrangements in Northern Ireland.

(AP3)

The Chair thanked PSNI for the presentation and they left the meeting.

6.2 PSNI Road Safety

The Chair welcomed Chief Superintendent Donaldson Deputy Head of Operational Support and his colleagues to the meeting and invited them to provide an update on the PSNI organisational priority of Road Safety.

Members were advised that:

- The has been a significant drop in the average roads death per year between 1970 and 2010,
- That the figure of people who have lost their lives on our roads has plateaued to between 50 and 60 per year,
- That PSNI still have a target of zero for road deaths and how this can be achieved,
- That Northern Ireland have five road deaths per month while the Island of Ireland average five deaths per week (with An Garda Síochána reporting 45 road deaths up to last week) and Great Britain average five deaths per day,
- The prioritising of the Roads Strategy Policy and the suite of actions for control within the strategy such as Education, Engagement, Partnerships and Enforcement,
- That there is now a Strategic Road Safety Forum which engages with Emergency Services, DFI, DOJ and DAERA,
- The co-ordination of activities, financing and tasking of road safety vans,
- That PSNI actively engage in all UK forums and have day to day contact with An Garda Síochána. They also meet every six months to identify trends and work on strategies,
- How best to reach the public and convey the devastation that all Road Traffic Collisions (RTC's) fatal or otherwise, have on families and communities,
- Road user's visuals e.g. billboards to make them stop and think of how their driving affects people,
- The want for a more bespoke proactive media plan to reach the public with information on how to be safe on the roads, constant updates of the number of road deaths and to have bespoke guidance and information available on a webpage,

- The need to monitor and evaluate the use of social media in reaching communities,
- That impact that advertising has on the public though comments made to operational officers,
- The Roads Policing Operational Plan and working with An Garda Síochána to implement one overall document to ensure all officers are aware of exactly what is required on the day,
- The ongoing Operations such as Operation Lifesaver and Operation Focus,
- The use of the Post Incident Support Group,
- The ongoing projects such as Drug Sampling, High Harm Offenders and Cause and Effect analysis,
- The use of Fixed Penalty Notices when dealing with careless driving.

Following the update Members discussed:

- If there were identifiable reasons for the plateau in recent figures,
- The dangers around rural roads, driving at certain times of night and age groups involved in road offences,
- If conversations take place between DFI and Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency with regards to training and maintenance of the roads,
- The Fatal Five areas,
- The support mechanism in place for officers dealing with fatalities,
- Pedestrian deaths and circumstances around who is at fault,
- The different speeding limits for heavy goods vehicles and if these should be implemented on heavy cars,
- The need to get the message across about reoffending,
- PSNI engagement with groups and families and the possibility of someone who has caused a death speaking at these events,
- The identification of Hotspots and the use of speed vans,

- The impact that the diminishing standards of the road have,
- That the number of collisions and the number of serious injury figures both reduced last year,
- The use of Speed Indication Devices (SIDs) which are provided by most PCSP's province wide,
- The interaction between PSNI, DFI and Planning departments prior to new housing developments being built,
- If there is any learning for learner drivers on carelessness and consequences,

PSNI addressed Members issues outlining the following:

- That it is a challenge to identify trends,
- That people do not understand the consequences of their actions, and may feel safer in more modern cars,
- That a core amount of people think that a fatality only happens to someone else,
- The daily work of officers on the three E's – Education, Engineering and Enforcement,
- The mental health resources available to offices including internal support from Managers which includes wellbeing days,
- The factors such as rural roads and darkness have in pedestrian's deaths and the ongoing work with Roads Partnership and licensing trade to try and reduce this number,
- The different types of vehicles on the roads and their safety features and the need to maybe look at reducing speed limits on certain roads,
- The impact of the Road Safe Roadshows held in local schools and colleges,
- How social media can mislead and lead to frustration on the positioning of speed vans which detracts from the fact that people are speeding,

- That every single location of speed vans is researched and reviewed,
- The limited resources within Roads Policing and the loss of 21 posts last year,
- That while there was a reduction last year in the number of collisions and serious injuries the number of fatalities increased,
- The use of SID's in local areas is helping to educate people on their speed in the local communities although there are no stats available at this time,
- There is communication between Traffic Management Officers and planning departments to try and resolve any issues at the planning stage of housing developments,
- That PSNI would like to do more in educating the public through a hard-hitting television advert and having more radio advertising, but this has been impacted by their budget,
- That the training for learner drivers has developed over the years and the possibility of looking at initiatives for young people in the future which may help reduce their insurance.

The Chair thanked PSNI representatives for the presentation and they left the meeting.

6.3 Update on Police Property Fund (PPF) Small Grant Scheme (Call 3)

The Partnership Manger provided Members with an update on the implementation of the third call of the PPF Small Grants Scheme (SGS) including the outcome of the assessment panel which met to review the applications on 15 March 2024.

The Partnership Manger thanked the Members that sat on the panel and outlined the selection process to date. The Partnership Manager advised that on closure of the call, 151 applications had been received. Following basic eligibility checks by the Programme team 56 applications were deemed to be ineligible and did

not progress for assessment. The remaining 95 applications were eligible to progress for full assessment by the panel. Following criteria eligibility checks carried out by the Programme Manager a further 59 applications were deemed ineligible while 36 were considered eligible. The Partnership Manager advised Panel Members received assessment files for the eligible and ineligible applications in advance of the panel meeting and were asked to score these independently using scoring guidance provided by the Programme Secretariat. At the meeting on 15 March 2024, panel Members agreed a final score for the 36 eligible projects and also requested to score 10 of the 59 “ineligible” applications.

The Partnership Manager advised that as a result, 21 applications had been recommended for approval at a combined value of £160,866 and noted that on this occasion the full call value was not allocated.

The Partnership manager outlined reasons as to why some schemes were deemed ineligible, for example not correctly applying the Project Guidance notes or not providing sufficient evidence to demonstrate how the project is value for money.

During discussion Members raised the following queries:

- If an additional smaller call will be run or if the money will be kept for a more substantial call in the future, noting there are no plans to run a fourth call at this time;
- If there would be capacity to provide feedback for those organisations whose applications were unsuccessful, noting that whilst it is not possible to provide feedback to individual organisations at this time, in advance of a fourth call it is planned to provide an online webinar and hold regional “application clinics” for groups to see what is required when applying for funding and to aid the application process;

- The advocacy role of the PCSPs and how they could use their platform to encourage more community organisations to submit funding applications,
- If the successful applicants will be asked to provide an assurance that they have appropriate safeguarding measures in place with regard to young people within these groups, noting that the Board takes assurance that as these organisations are constituted bodies, they should have appropriate safeguarding policies and measures already in place. It was also agreed to include wording in the Standard Conditions of Grant document advising that organisations must confirm they have appropriate safeguarding measures in place.
- Consideration of methods and approaches to attract applications in future calls from new groups/organisations;
- The potential for relaxing the criteria, noting the consensus was to leave it as it currently stands, however in order to strengthen the PSNI Engagement criterion it was suggested that for future calls the application form may be amended to include confirmation from a local PSNI representative that they are a project partner and have been involved in the development of the project thus far,
- If there should be a maximum income for organisations applying which may attract a broader range of smaller groups, noting that if a maximum income was imposed this could potentially lose strong community group applications.

Following discussion, Members **NOTED** the update provided and the Committee **AGREED** to recommend to the Board that the 21 projects selected for funding by the assessment panel are approved for a Letter of Offer at the April 2024 Board meeting.

6.4 Problem Solving Award Ceremony Update

The Engagement Manager provided Members with an update on the Problem Solving in Partnership Awards 2024, which took place on 22 February 2024. The

Engagement Manager advised the awards were designed to recognise and celebrate innovative crime fighting projects where the police, community and external partners successfully work together to make a difference in communities. They also provide an opportunity to highlight and recognise excellence and best practice in relation to PSNI Business Support (staff).

The Engagement Manager advised the PCSP category was a new addition to the 2024 award categories and was included to help raise the profile of the work of the PCSPs and highlight the innovative projects being co-delivered by local Neighbourhood Policing teams through PCSP action plans. The Engagement Manager noted that of the 37 applications received overall, 11 were in the PCSP category.

The Engagement Manager provided an overview of the winning applications in each of the 6 categories and noted that the winner in the PCSP category was Causeway Coast and Glens (CCG) PCSP Disability Project which was developed to help support people with disabilities and their carers to ensure they felt safe and knew how to access support in their local council area. The Engagement Manager advised the runner up in this category was Armagh Banbridge & Craigavon PCSP which looked to combat disengaged youths between 14 to 16 years old through a drugs misuse programme.

The Engagement Manager advised that a Problem-Solving Conference is scheduled to take place at the Dunsilly Hotel, Antrim on 16 April 2024 and noted an invite will be issued to Members in due course once the agenda and programme are finalised.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

6.5 Report on PSNI REaL Events

The Engagement Manager presented a paper which provided Members with a summary of the PSNI Reference, Engagement and Listening (REaL) events held in 2023. The Engagement Manager advised that PSNI published its Engagement Vision “Here for You” in June 2022 and the strategy incorporated five key pillars.). The aim of the REaL events is to provide community representatives with the opportunity to speak directly with the PSNI Strategic Community Engagement Team (SCET) and other senior police officers about their experiences of policing in general and to develop a series of action plans across these communities encompassing the five pillars/themes. It is hoped that this in turn will help to improve trust and confidence in policing. The Engagement Manager noted a range of issues broadly connected to these pillars have been consistently raised by stakeholders during the consultation conducted by the SCET.

The Engagement Manager advised seven REaL events were held in 2023 and were attended by Board Members and officials who provided specific input against two of the engagement pillars. The Engagement Manager noted following these events PSNI provided the Board with a summary of the key themes and topics raised which cut across multiple communities such as:

- The need to place a focus on the internal culture of PSNI;
- The importance of Neighbourhood Policing within each community, noting concerns raised regarding the high turnover of staff which inhibits relationship building;
- The need for greater cultural awareness across all levels of the PSNI;
- The need to address barriers to attraction and recruitment;
- The use of Stop and Search within their communities;
- The importance of methods through which the community can seek to hold the PSNI to account both at a strategic level and locally.

The Engagement Manager provided an overview of each of the events held in 2023 and noted the topics and discussion highlights for each and advised that these events held throughout 2023 were primarily to establish an initial baseline engagement session with each of the community groups. The Engagement Manager added that throughout 2024, the PSNI will continue to further enhance these engagement events, focusing on establishing if there has been any subsequent changes or new issues identified within each of the communities and providing updates to the community representatives, on any potential solutions or actions PSNI have taken as a result of the feedback received from the initial sessions held.

The Engagement Manager advised that two further REaL events have been held in 2024, the first with the Protestant, Unionist, Loyalist (PUL) Community on 12 February and the second with the Ethnic Minority Community on 4 March 2024 and briefing papers on these events are included with the papers for today's meeting. The Engagement Manager noted that a further REaL event with Disability Groups has been scheduled for 25 April 2024.

During discussion Members noted the following:

- The issue of two tier policing was raised at both PUL and CNR events and suggested the possibility of holding a combined event,
- The need for these events to be thematic as the benefits observed in them may not have been captured through other means in the community,
- Potentially having similar events for the refugee population/communities and for working class communities, irrespective of community background, to highlight that all communities face similar issues,
- The lack of awareness of PCSP's within the PUL community and the barriers facing potential PCSP Members e.g. caring responsibilities,
- PSNI should seek feedback from the participants of these events as to next steps and let that feedback drive the way forward as opposed to being PSNI led,

- At the most recent PUL event last month, it was reported that relations had improved since the previous event in 2023,
- At the Children & Young People's event at Newforge feedback had been received noting that the venue wasn't easily accessed and that some of the language used by PSNI may not have been understood by all attendees/participants.

The Engagement Manager undertook to feed Members comments back to PSNI for consideration. **(AP4)**

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

6.6 Programme of Work 2024/25

The Director of Partnership presented the draft Committee Programme of Work for the period May 2024 – March 2025 and included the Committee's Terms of Reference (ToR). The Director of Partnership advised the Committee ToR were previously agreed in October 2023 and will be reviewed again following the reconstitution of the Board next month, after the completion of the recruitment competition for new Independent Board Members.

The Director of Partnership advised there will not be a meeting of the Partnership Committee in April 2024 due to the Easter holiday period and the need for an additional Board meeting to be convened to elect a new Board Chair and Vice Chair.

The Director of Partnership noted that the new Performance Plan measures which are reported on through this Committee are scheduled alongside the Children & Young People Strategy and other presentations from PSNI. The Director of Partnership also noted that in relation to PCSP and Engagement items of business, Board Officials have scheduled in what is known at this time however, it was a live document and will be updated throughout the year as and when required.

During discussion Members raised the following queries:

- The programme of work to be updated for May 2024 to include an update from the most recent Joint Committee meeting;
- the reporting timeframe on measures 3.1.2 and 3.1.3, as these are not scheduled to be considered again until 2025, noting the timing of the updates of the measures are set by the Performance Committee;

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

No questions were raised.

8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES

The Communications Manager advised Members that a Board statement in response to the recent Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) inspection report on Community Safety and Local Policing Arrangements in Northern Ireland has been issued on 20 March 2024.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Engagement Manager provided Members with an update on the following planned upcoming events:

- Balmoral Show 2024 – mid-May,
- REaL Event with Disability Groups, 25 April 2024 – a formal invite will be issued to Members in due course,
- “Ride Alongs” with PSNI – Seven Members have expressed an interest in attending and if anyone else wishes to avail of this opportunity an email

is required giving consent for PSNI to be provided with the Member's personal email address,


- NICCY Event Youth Forum – 4th and 5th April in Corrymeela Centre, Ballycastle.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 16 May 2024 in Police Training College in Garnerville.**

The meeting ended at 13:00 hours

CHAIR



PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE

MARCH 2024