

## **NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING OF PARTNERSHIP COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 20 JUNE 2024 AT 9.30AM IN JAMES HOUSE**

**PRESENT:**

- Mr Peter McReynolds MLA (Committee Chair)
- Dr Kate Lavery (Committee Vice Chair)
- Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
- (1) Mrs Cheryl Brownlee MLA
- Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
- Mrs Marian Cree
- (2) Mr Tommy O'Reilly

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

- (3) Mr Mukesh Sharma (Board Chair)
- (3) Mr Brendan Mullan (Board Vice-Chair)

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

- (4) T/Assistant Chief Constable Ryan Henderson
- (4) Head of Justice Healthcare
- (4) Chief Superintendent Gary McDonald
- (5) Assistant Chief Constable Bobby Singleton
- (5) Representative from Strategic Partnerships & Prevention branch

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

- (5) one PSNI official
- (6) Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive
- Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Partnership
- Five Board Officials

- (1) Items 6.1 and 6.2 only
- (2) Left after Item 6.2
- (3) Items 6.1 and 6.2 only
- (4) Item 6.1 only
- (5) Items 6.1 and 6.2 only
- (6) From Item 6.1 on

#### **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr Cathal Boylan MLA, Mr Mark Durkan MLA and Mr Patrick Nelson.

The Chair welcomed new Independent Member Mrs Marian Cree to her first meeting of the Committee.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting, and no one raised any business that they wished to discuss at agenda item 9 under 'Any Other Business'.

## **2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

No conflicts of interest were declared.

## **3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16 MAY 2024**

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 16 May 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 16 May 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 Director of Partnership.

In relation to Action Point 1 from the meeting on 21 March 2024 regarding anti-social behaviour (ASB) in the Belfast area, the Director of Partnership noted there is still one part of this action outstanding and that is information in respect of a review of ASB in the Belfast District that PSNI had previously

advised they were going to carry out. The Director of Partnership advised PSNI have provided some ASB figures for the other District Electoral Areas (DEAs) in Belfast however, an update on the review is still awaited therefore this action will remain open.

In relation to Action Point 1 from the meeting on 16 May 2024 regarding the Partnership Committee Terms of Reference (ToR), the Director of Partnership advised that due to the relatively new membership of the Committee, it had previously been agreed to wait until the September meeting of the Committee to review the Terms of Reference. These will be included on the agenda of the Partnership Committee meeting in September 2024. In the interim, this action will remain open.

In relation to Action Point 2 from the meeting on 16 May 2024 regarding the Partnership Committee Annual report, the Director of Partnership advised the report was approved by the Board at its meeting on 6 June 2024 and will be published on the Board's website. This action can now be closed.

#### **4.1 Correspondence from DFI in respect of Transformation of Custody Healthcare**

In relation to Action Point 3 from the meeting on 15 February 2024 regarding the correspondence to Department for Infrastructure in respect of Transformation of Custody Healthcare and a request to support a legislative change to allow healthcare professionals other than doctors to conduct tasks such as taking samples of blood or urine from detainees in custody, the Director of Partnership advised that a response had been received which advised that the Infrastructure Minister has asked his officials to liaise with PSNI to consider the matter further.

This action can now be closed.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

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

The Committee **NOTED** the updates and related verbal overview provided in respect of the following agenda items.

### **5.1 PSNI SCET Community Impact Assessment**

The Chair noted that following a request by Members at last month's Committee meeting the PSNI's Strategic Community Engagement Team (SCET) had provided a copy of the most recent Community Impact Assessment for Members information.

The Chair emphasised the "Sensitive" marking on the document and stressed that this must not be shared outside of Board Members.

For the benefit of the new Members, the Director of Partnership explained the background and purpose of a Community Impact Assessment.

Members **NOTED** the report.

### **5.2 Joint Committee Draft Agenda – 25 June 2024**

The Chair highlighted the draft agenda for the Joint Committee meeting which is scheduled to take place on Tuesday 25 June 2024.

A Member advised they had some comments in relation to three of the agenda items that they would like Joint Committee to give consideration to and will email the wording to the Director of Partnership and the Partnership Manager.

Members **NOTED** the agenda.

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

Before PSNI joined the meeting Board officials provided Members with an overview of agenda items 6.1 and 6.2 (Right Care Right Person presentation and update on Children & Young People Strategy respectively).

### **6.1 PSNI Right Care Right Person Presentation**

The Committee welcomed T/Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Ryan Henderson, Head of Justice Healthcare within PSNI, and Chief Superintendent Gary McDonald to the meeting.

T/ACC Henderson explained the background to the project and advised PSNI is fast becoming the agency of first resort when a person is experiencing a mental health crisis, particularly outside of standard working hours, mainly due to the financial restraints and increased pressures within the Health sector. This has resulted in police officers delivering non policing services and being diverted away from core policing duties. T/ACC Henderson advised that PSNI officers are increasingly spending more time on incidents that require no policing skill, experience or training. T/ACC Henderson reported that of the 41,724 calls classed as “Concern for Safety” received by PSNI from April 2023 – April 2024, only 1,772 involved a crime.

T/ACC Henderson advised Right Care, Right Person (RCRP) is a national program and 43 police services across England and Wales have signed up to work in partnership with health and social care partners to implement the program safely and effectively. The aim of the programme is to ensure that individuals in health crisis are seen by the right professional. T/ACC Henderson noted PSNI officers are frequently being asked to make clinical decisions on people’s lives, even though they are not healthcare

professionals and advised that as such, they are at greater risk of scrutiny/consequences than a medical professional if someone comes to harm whilst in their care. T/ACC Henderson stressed however, that despite media narrative to the contrary PSNI are keen to reassure the public that this does not mean that PSNI will no longer attend mental health incidents, PSNI will always attend incidents where there is a threat to life but will primarily be focusing their attention on incidents where there is a risk of harm or a crime has been committed.

Key areas highlighted during the briefing included:

- The four key areas and stages of the project
- Examples of multiple other UK forces in England & Wales that have implemented the project/initiative and the positive results yielded.
- Governance arrangements, Stakeholder engagement with key partners and communications plan.
- Police Legal Responsibilities.
- Challenges to the project delivery

T/ACC Henderson reported that throughout June 2024 PSNI are carrying out a five-week data exercise to demonstrate current demand related to incidents which will fall under RCRP. T/ACC Henderson advised the RCRP principles will be applied to the data and demonstrate analytically what PSNI would and wouldn't attend post implementation. Of the calls PSNI would no longer attend, they will identify where they think the demand should be diverted based on the nature and needs of the person involved. T/ACC Henderson advised this information will be shared with relevant partners when the report is created, in order to collaboratively work together to get better outcomes for all partners and the person involved.

Following the presentation discussion focused on:

- What learning has been derived from other UK forces that have adopted/implemented this model.
- The need to demonstrate multi-agency governance structures and evidence of jointly developed plans.
- The need for Board Members to advocate for buy-in/support from other statutory agencies and partners.
- How realistic/achievable is the proposed “Go Live” date of November 2024.
- The location of the contact management centres and consideration of a phased roll out of the project across NI as opposed to all contact management centres implementing the new model at once.
- The need for a consistent approach across all NI Health Trusts and the level of engagement undertaken to date with Trust Chief Executives.
- Legal implications/accountability concerns and mitigations in place to ensure call handlers are not held responsible for adverse incidents if the decision-making framework recommends that it is not appropriate for PSNI to attend a specific call.
- Reassurance that Department of Health (DoH) are fully on board and if they have confirmed their commitment to delivering the project.
- The impacts seen/proven on the health sector in the UK in the areas where the police forces have already implemented this system.

Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- To write to the DoH Minister and the Chair of the Health Committee and the Department of Justice (DoJ) Minister and Chair of the Justice Committee to highlight the importance of this initiative and to seek assurances from both Departments that they are fully committed to working collaboratively with PSNI to deliver and implement the project; and **(AP1)**

- To write to the PSNI to request details of how the programme will be monitored and evaluated, details of the enhancements in place to capture baseline data and plans for the training of call handlers prior to the roll-out of the programme. **(AP2)**

The Chair thanked T/ACC Henderson, the Head of Justice Healthcare, and Chief Superintendent McDonald for their briefing and they left the meeting.

## **6.2 PSNI Update on Children and Young People Strategy**

The Chair welcomed ACC Singleton and the representative from the PSNI's Strategic Partnerships & Prevention Team to the meeting and invited ACC Singleton to present PSNI's update on the implementation of the Children and Young People Strategy.

ACC Singleton noted the Children & Young People's Strategy was formally launched in June 2023 and is based on five key themes:

- Engagement
- Safety & Protection
- Suspected Offending
- Victims & Witnesses
- Stop & Search

ACC Singleton provided an update on work undertaken since the previous update to the Committee in January 2024 against each of the five themes and outlined various events, initiatives and programmes taking place across the various districts to engage with young people from a diverse range of communities and backgrounds to progress the commitments made by PSNI in the strategy. ACC Singleton noted PSNI have also focused funding received from the NI Executive's Programme on Paramilitarism and Organised Crime (EPPOC) into areas where Paramilitary and Organised



Crime Gang coercive control is seen to manifest.

During discussion Members raised the following with PSNI:

- An update on the production of a child friendly App that was previously suggested at a Youth REaL event; noting that it had since been agreed to move in a different direction with the production of a Stop and Search information card which outlines information on rights and procedures relating to stop and search. It was noted that when complete, a QR code will be included on the back of the information card with links to a webpage, designed for young people with information, links and detail which are relevant to the other thematic areas of the Children & Young People Strategy.
- If young people have been involved with designing the Stop and Search information webpage, noting that they have been.
- The importance of ensuring that the proposed Youth Person's Forum is inclusive and representative of children and young people across Northern Ireland.
- Potential funding streams for Safe Place pilots/initiatives.
- Young People's common perception of stop and search, noting that the general feeling was one of stereotyping/harassment.
- What percentage of under 18's was stopped and searched; noting that according to figures produced on 22 May 2024, of the 25,058 stopped and search last year, 8% were under 18s.
- An update on the progress of the implementation of the Youth Volunteer Academies; noting that three of the four Youth Volunteer Academies have been ran this year in tandem with the Education Authority (EA); the results of which can be shared; and
- An update on Youth Engagement Clinics and Community Resolution Notices.

Following discussion, it was agreed that PSNI would revert in writing on a

number of specific issues raised by a Member.

Members **NOTED** the update provided and confirmed they were content with the format and structure of the report.

The Chair thanked ACC Singleton and the representative from the Strategic Partnerships & Prevention Team for their briefing and they left the meeting.

### **6.3 Outcome of PCSP Reconstitution**

The Partnership Manager presented a paper which provided members with a summary of the outcome of the PCSP Reconstitution process and advised of next steps to appoint a final member of Antrim & Newtownabbey PCSP and generate reserve lists for 3 other Council areas. The paper also provided Members with the initial plans for induction training for new PCSP Independent Members.

For the benefit of the new Committee Members the Partnership Manager provided an overview of the reconstitution process thus far. The Partnership Manager confirmed Reconstitution took place as planned on 1 June 2024 and provided a high-level analysis of the successful candidates, in respect of community background, age, and gender, noting a high percentage (82%) of candidates are new Members.

The Partnership Manager advised that as noted above, an additional appointment is required for Antrim & Newtownabbey PCSP along with the need to generate a reserve list for this PCSP and for Causeway Coast & Glens, Fermanagh & Omagh PCSPs and the Belfast District PCSPs. As such, preparations are underway to commence advertising for the four Council areas and it is anticipated that a call for applications will open on 30 June 2024 and will remain open until 30 August 2024. The Partnership Manager noted the same process must be followed in respect of shortlisting,

interviewing and appointments, therefore as before, shortlisting and interviews will take place at Council level with expected suitable candidates to be sent to the Board for appointment by the end of November 2024. The Board's appointment panel will then be reconvened to appoint the final candidate to Antrim & Newtownabbey PCSP and to approve the reserve lists for the three other Council areas.

The Partnership Manager also advised that Board officials met with a subgroup of PCSP Managers during May 2024 to discuss the timing and potential contents of a training programme for new PCSP Independent Members. The Partnership Manager noted it was agreed that a series of initial induction training sessions would be carried out during September/October 2024 across the council areas and encouraged Committee members to attend to highlight the role of the Board. The Partnership Manager advised that once the training timetable has been confirmed it will be circulated to Partnership Committee members to check and confirm their availability.

Members **NOTED** the update provided.

#### **6.4 Report on Programme of Engagement 23/24**

The Engagement Manager presented a paper which provided Members with an update on the Board's Programme of Engagement 2023-2025, in relation to activity completed between April 2023 – March 2024.

The Engagement Manager advised that in November 2023, the Board agreed the Engagement Strategy and the associated Programme of Engagement for 2023-2025, which incorporates the "Strands of Engagement" noted below:

- Strand 1 – Engagement with the Community through Partnership and

#### Collaboration

- Strand 2 – Engagement with Stakeholders
- Strand 3 – Consultation, Research & Reports

The Engagement Manager advised a comprehensive update on each strand is provided at Annexes A-C of the meeting papers and provided Members with an overview of the activities that have been delivered under each of the strands, covering the period April 2023 – March 2024. The Engagement Manager highlighted key events which took place throughout the reporting period across each sector and noted these events have been utilised to promote and inform the wider community/community representatives of a number of key work areas for the Board.

The Engagement Manager also updated Members on planned Engagement activity in 2024\25, noting plans are underway for the first formal meeting of a Youth Justice Forum to be held in autumn 2024, Board Member attendance and input into new introductory sessions with PSNI Student Officer trainees, the establishment of strategic and focused engagement events that will be linked to specific measures within the NI Policing Plan and a PCSP Programme of Activity Schedule.

The Engagement Manager advised the schedule of engagement events will be issued to all Board Members on a quarterly basis and encouraged Members to attend and provide support where possible. The Director of Partnership acknowledged Members' heavily committed diaries, however, re-iterated the Engagement Manager's comments and the need for Members to volunteer to attend events and advocate for the work of the Board. The Engagement Manager advised the next engagement event is Belfast Pride which is scheduled for 27 July 2024. Invitations to Members will issue in due course.

The Engagement Manager advised that following a review of the activities

delivered over the reporting period, Board officials have identified some actions within the Programme of Engagement where amendments could be considered. These changes relate specifically to Strand 1 – Engagement with the Community through Partnership & Collaboration:

- Action 1.2 - PSNI/NICCY – Youth Voice Event – rename the action - the establishment of a “Youth Justice Forum”, as opposed to a “Youth Conference”.
- Action 1.6 - Initiate initial engagement with identified Sector/Groups – it is proposed to remove this action to avoid duplication as already covered under REaL events.
- Action 1.7 - Establishment of 1-1 meetings with identified Sector/Groups (in conjunction with Board Members) – it is proposed to remove this action to avoid duplication as already covered under REaL events.
- Action 1.9 – Conversations with Purpose – This is a proposed new action which was not originally included within the original Programme of Engagement but is proposed as a pilot with Domestic Abuse (incorporating Violence Against Women and Girls) being identified as the theme for the first phase of delivery.

Following discussion, Members **NOTED** the updates provided and agreed to **APPROVE** the amendments to Strand 1 of the Programme of Engagement.

## **6.5 Independent Custody Visitor Annual Report 23/24**

The Engagement Manager presented a paper which provided Members with the Independent Custody Visiting Annual Report for the 2023/24 reporting year.

The Engagement Manager provided background information to the scheme,

noting that Independent Custody Visitors (ICVs) are impartial volunteers from across the community who work independently of the police and criminal justice system and make unannounced visits to custody suites to check and report on the rights, health and wellbeing, and conditions of people being detained in custody. The Engagement Manager advised the Board is responsible for the ICV Scheme, which is managed by the Engagement Branch, with the Partnership Committee ultimately being responsible for overall scrutiny of the scheme.

The Engagement Manager noted that currently, there are 23 ICVs based in three Custody Visiting Teams across Northern Ireland (as of March 2024). This is a decrease of six ICVs from the previous reporting period and is due to volunteers coming to the end of their tenure, natural attrition and changes to individual's personal circumstances.

The Engagement Manager explained the monitoring data within this year's report was compiled between Board Officials within Engagement Branch and the Board's statistician seconded from the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA). The Engagement Manager noted the NISRA Official Statistical Report on Independent Custody Visiting 2023/24 and the ICV Annual Report 2023/24 and advised that the annual report is essentially a summary of the key data within the Official Statistical Report. Both documents provide a comprehensive source of monitoring data in relation to the Custody Visiting Scheme. The Engagement Manager highlighted some key facts in the report such as:

- 88% of custody records were checked by ICVs which was a 3% increase from the previous year (85%);
- 48% of detainees held under the Terrorism Act (2000), known as TACT detainees were seen compared to 35% in the previous year;
- The overall refusal rate of detainees was 1.4% which was a decrease of 0.2% from the previous year; and

- a total of 1,048 detainees were selected for a visit, of which ICVs spoke to 480 detainees (46%), a 2% decrease from the 2022/23 uptake rate of 48%.

The Engagement Manager reported that in addition to the Board being reaccredited with Investing in Volunteers (IiV), in November 2023 the Board also received a further accreditation under the Independent Custody Visiting Association's (ICVA) Quality Assurance Framework (QAF) which is a new accreditation for the Board and is specific to the ICV Scheme.

The Engagement Manager also highlighted various means of ICV promotion and recruitment events which took place throughout the reporting period and noted that in the 2023/24 reporting year, two recruitment panels were convened, which resulted in a total of four candidates being deemed appointable to the scheme.

A Member congratulated the Engagement team on a job well done and Members **NOTED** the update provided. It was **AGREED:**

- To approve the 2023\24 ICV Annual report and to make a recommendation to the Board that the report can be published on the Board's website. **(AP3)**

## **6.6 Communications Action Plan 2023/24 Update**

The Acting Communications Manager presented a paper which provided Members with details of communications activity to support the work of the Policing Board during the period 1 April 2023 - 31 March 2024 and also provided the Communications Action Plan for 2024\25.

The Acting Communications Manager outlined the six main work areas of the Communications team and provided an overview of actions taken under

each area in relation to the Communications Action Plan for 2023\24. The Acting Communications Manager advised that actions and activities highlighted in the Communications Action Plan are reviewed on a regular basis to allow new or emerging activities or priorities to be incorporated into the Plan. The Acting Communications Manager noted that through the work of the Board, Board Members and officials frequently engage and communicate with a wide range of audiences and an assortment of communication channels and assets are used in the delivery of this Plan.

The Acting Communications Manager reported that the Board has a high level of engagement across the various social media channels and continues to report an increase in social media followers, page views, likes and subscribers to the Board's YouTube channel and provided various statistics highlighting the increases and demonstrating the increased awareness of the Board's profile.

In relation to the Communications Action Plan for 2024\25, the Acting Communications Manager advised that the Plan features the same generic format and structure as previous years, however noted that key activities included in this year's plan are to support the development and publication of a new Corporate Plan, as well as the new 2025 – 2030 Policing Plan, Community Safety survey and the design and publication of PSNI senior officer and staff recruitment campaigns.

In response to a Member's question, the Director of Partnership advised that the number of Freedom of Information (FOI) requests received to date in this financial year is already almost at the same level as the total number received in the full 23/24 year. Due to the complexity and volume of the requests it was becoming increasingly difficult to respond to all requests within the target deadlines. The Director of Partnership confirmed that Board Senior Management Team (SMT) are aware of this pressure and are considering options to alleviate the pressure.



Members **NOTED** the update provided.

**7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

None.

**8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES**

No other communication issues were raised.

**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was conducted.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 19 September 2024** at 9.30am in James House.

The meeting ended at 12.30pm

**CHAIR**

**PARTNERSHIP DIRECTORATE  
JUNE 2024**