

LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Public Meeting of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership held in Carryduff Primary School on Tuesday, 9 April, 2019 at 7.05 pm

PRESENT: Councillor B Hanvey (Chairman)
Councillor A P Ewing
Alderman M Henderson MBE
Alderman G Rice MBE
Councillor R Walker
Mr M Busch
Ms D Hancock

IN ATTENDANCE: PCSP Manager
PCSP Officer (Mr S Addley)
Member Services Officer
PCSP Administrative Officer

Designated Organisations

Superintendent D Beck, Police Service of Northern Ireland
Chief Inspector J Wilson, Police Service of Northern Ireland
Detective Inspector S Thompson, Police Service of Northern
Ireland
Mr P Thompson, Probation Board of Northern Ireland
Ms P Johnston, Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Women's Aid

Mrs V Kearney, Domestic Violence Liaison Officer
Mrs S Graham

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor B Hanvey, welcomed those present to the meeting, which was themed on domestic violence.

1. **Apologies**

It was agreed to accept apologies for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Councillor J Palmer, Mr P Dean, Mrs P Leeson, Mrs C McCullough, Mrs C Connolly, Head of Business and Democratic Services, Ms J Harkness, Youth Justice Agency and Mr J Craig, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service.

2. **Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest.

3. Presentation on Domestic Violence

Superintendent D Beck stated that it was important to highlight the issue of domestic violence at a public meeting of the PCSP as there had been quite a considerable increase in this offence across the Lisburn & Castlereagh district. This year, rape crimes across the district had increased from 62 to 76, sexual assaults had increased from 209 to 250 and crimes with a domestic motivation had increased by approximately 25%. These increases were in line with the trend nationally and presented challenges to both society and the police. The Superintendent stated that these types of crimes were extremely complex to investigate and put significant demands on the police to ensure provision of a high quality service to victims, who were usually very vulnerable adults. The Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, who was based in Lisburn Police Station, provided seamless support and assistance to victims of domestic violence. In addition to this, awareness training was provided to Police Officers and Officers were routinely deployed wearing Body Worn Cameras. The Public Protection Branch had been established in April 2015 and was an amalgamation of a number of teams such as the Child Abuse, Offender Management and Rape Crime Teams. The Public Protection Branch dealt with child abuse, rape crime, child sexual exploitation, adult safeguarding, offender management and the Domestic Violence and Abuse Disclosure Scheme.

With the use of visual aid equipment, Detective Inspector Thompson made a presentation in respect of the work of the Public Protection Branch, which he explained was aligned with the boundaries of the Health Trust rather than the Council area.

In response to a query raised by a member of the public in relation to how the police traced anyone downloading images of children, Chief Inspector Thompson stated that 'known' indecent images of children had a digital fingerprint and would be triggered with the internet service provider when downloaded or shared online and this would be reported to the police. Officers would then carry out a search of the person's house and seize mobile phones, computers, etc for investigation. The sharing of new indecent images could take a while to be picked up by law enforcement and there was a team that worked to identify new victims. The Chief Inspector advised that, regardless of whether or not a person's hard drive had been deleted, the police could still access files.

Superintendent Beck advised that, of the increase in sexual crimes, a large amount of those referred to cyber-enabled sexual crime. Some of those involved young people sharing indecent images of themselves and each other and Officers attended schools to educate young people about the dangers of such activity.

At this stage, Mrs V Kearney made a verbal presentation in relation to the work of Women's Aid and specifically her role as Domestic Violence Liaison Officer, based in Lisburn Police Station.

The Chairman, Councillor B Hanvey, thanked all speakers for their very informative presentations.

4. Questions

Before inviting questions from the floor, the Chairman, Councillor B Hanvey, gave a statistical update in relation to the recently installed Speed Indicator Device on the Ballynahinch Road and advised that similar devices were to be installed in other locations within the Council area in coming weeks.

4.1 Burglaries Chairman, Councillor B Hanvey

The Chairman, Councillor B Hanvey, stated that burglary and attempted burglary were current issues of concern in Carryduff and the Four Winds area. He asked what advice the police could give and if any initiatives were underway to bring a level of reassurance to the community. Alderman G Rice and Councillor N Anderson also asked that serious attention be given to the matter of burglaries, as well as antisocial behaviour and vandalism. Superintendent D Beck stated that he appreciated the concerns and anxiety of the community in respect of burglaries, the hurt and pain caused to victims and the impact on neighbours, friends and relations. Burglary remained a priority for all Officers right across the district and because of activities undertaken to address this, there had been a significant reduction of approximately 15% over the last year, with in the region of 69 fewer victims of burglary than the previous year. There had been an increase in the number of burglaries, particularly in the Newtownbreda and Carryduff areas, over the last few weeks. Responses to burglaries were categorised into four elements.

The first element was that all burglaries were reviewed on a daily basis by the Detective Inspector in Lisburn and her team of Detective Sergeants to ensure consistent and robust investigation. They considered crime scene investigations, evidence, intelligence opportunities and CCTV. They liaised closely with their colleagues in Belfast and right across the southern area around potential lines of enquiry. An analyst worked full-time scrutinising all incidents across Northern Ireland, looking at potential suspects and patterns. It was not possible to have a Police Officer on every street corner and, therefore, it was important that residents remained focused and reported any suspicious activity to police.

The second element was patrol activity. The police continued to maximise the resources available in terms of both uniformed and plain clothes Officers. On an ongoing basis, Officers were deployed from local Policing Teams, Neighbourhood Policing Teams, the District Support Team and the Southern Area Burglary Team. Use had also been made of the Dog Section.

The third element was reassurance to communities by being as visible as possible. Police also kept people informed and updated via social media, the Text Alert Scheme and the Nextdoor initiative. When burglaries happened, house to house calls would be conducted in the area.

Element four was crime prevention and education. The Crime Prevention Officer visited home owners and businesses daily in an attempt to build crime prevention awareness. Unfortunately, quite a significant number of break-ins were through unlocked doors and windows, cars left open, etc and the Superintendent stressed that there was an onus on members of the community to take

4.1 Burglaries (Contd)
Chairman, Councillor B Hanvey

responsibility for the security of their property. The police were working with the PCSP in respect of No Cold Calling Zones. There were in the region of 79 Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in the Lisburn & Castlereagh District and the establishment of more was encouraged.

Figures suggested that what the police were doing was working as over the last year burglaries had decreased and had seen the lowest level of burglaries in the district for 18 years.

In relation to comments about antisocial behaviour, Chief Inspector Wilson confirmed that this was a local area priority. Antisocial behaviour took many forms - people mostly associated it with young people congregating in areas and partaking in risk-taking behaviour; however, things such as neighbour disputes and environmental issues like fly tipping could also be defined as antisocial behaviour. There had been a rise in antisocial behaviour taking place over social media platforms. If people continued with that behaviour, what started off as being rude could become a criminal offence and lead to charges such as harassment or misuse of electronic communications. Addressing antisocial behaviour was not an issue for police alone, but required working alongside voluntary and statutory-based partners, and it was also important that parents were aware of their children's whereabouts. Information was gathered so that hotspots could be identified and patrols increased accordingly. Through dedicated patrols and increased resources, quite a lot of alcohol had been seized from young people and disposed of and a number of referrals made to Youth Diversion Officers for both offending and non-offending behaviour. Local Neighbourhood Police Officers engaged with youths through schools and youth groups, which it was hoped would have a preventative effect.

4.2 Thanks to Women's Aid
Councillor R Walker

Councillor R Walker expressed her personal thanks to the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer for the support she had given her over the past four years.

4.3 Thanks to Women's Aid and Police
Community Volunteer and Chair of Home Start Early Intervention Lisburn

A member of the public in attendance, who was a community volunteer and Chair of Home Start Early Intervention Lisburn, thanked the police and the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer for the work they did and asked how the voluntary sector and the community could support the work being done. Superintendent D Beck stated it was important that there was an acceptance that domestic abuse was happening and that safe places were created for people to go. Some businesses, such as hairdressers, now advertised that they were a safe place and those types of interventions helped society to acknowledge it happened and try to support victims through it. The Domestic Violence Liaison Officer encouraged people to ask anyone they suspected to be a victim if someone at home was harming them. Mrs S Graham from Women's Aid stated that it was

4.3 Thanks to Women's Aid and Police (Contd)
Community Volunteer and Chair of Home Start Early Intervention Lisburn

easy to put the focus on the victim; however, it was important to highlight that the focus should be on the perpetrator and the police should push for prosecutions using the pro-arrest policy, breaches of Non Molestation Orders, etc.

4.4 Perpetrators
Member of the Public

A member of the public asked what happened in relation to perpetrators and if any arrests were being made. She stated that, in the street where she resided, there had been a few incidents and a burglary over the last couple of weeks. One of her neighbours had CCTV footage of people trying doors and another neighbour had footage of men trying his door handle and then driving away in another neighbour's car. However, the member of the public was concerned that the police had subsequently distributed leaflets seeking information in relation to the incident, yet she considered something positive should have come from the information already available to them.

Superintendent D Beck stressed that, whilst it could be frustrating and slow, it was important for the police to gather as much information as possible rather than just accept there was CCTV footage and not ask other neighbours – hence the leaflet distribution. There had been some success and three arrests had been made in respect of burglaries in the Castlereagh area in the last few weeks; people had been charged and brought to court the next day. This had been a result of (a) an initial call from a member of the public advising there was someone outside a property; and (b) Officers in patrol in the area being very quick to respond, within minutes. The Reducing Offenders Unit targeted key offenders both in Belfast and in the Lisburn & Castlereagh area. There were Officers dedicated to manage significant offenders.

4.5 Campaign for Male Victims
Councillor V Kamble

Councillor V Kamble stated that there should be a pertinent campaign to raise awareness for male victims of domestic violence. Superintendent D Beck advised that there was an increasing number of male victims and victims from same-sex relationships and there was a referral system for men as well. Detective Inspector S Thompson pointed out that many campaigns did target both sexes, as well as same-sex relationships; however, the stark reality was that statistics indicated that a huge amount of domestic violence was men against women.

4.6 Fear of Crime
Member of the Public

A member of the public stated that she had a fear of being a victim of crime, given the number of burglaries there had been in her area. She asked if there had been an increase in the number of unmarked patrol cars in the area and what that number currently was. She sought an assurance that, if she reported an incident, she would receive a quick response. Superintendent D Beck stated

4.6 Fear of Crime (Contd)
Member of the Public

that any victim of burglary would get a patrol response, a thorough investigation and support. There was a recent trend of opportunists trying doors to locate an unlocked one; therefore, it was important for people to be responsible when it came to their home security. The Superintendent confirmed that there was an increased level of patrolling in the area; however, he pointed out that the police had a finite resource and this had to be used where problems were at the time. He stated that it was important to look at the bigger picture – whilst there had been a spike in burglaries at this minute in time, overall the burglary figure was still low and the Lisburn & Castlereagh area was a safe place to live and work. Chief Inspector Wilson explained that, as well as focusing on hotspot areas, resources were also used to target organised crime gangs that travelled throughout the district, particularly via the M1 and A1, and prevent them coming into the area.

4.7 Difficulty Contacting 101
Member of the Public

A member of the public referred to difficulties he had experienced when trying to get through to 101 to report a suspicious van. He had tried on three occasions but, having held on for six minutes each time, his calls had not been answered. Superintendent D Beck acknowledged that issues with 101 had been raised quite a lot of times. There had been a significant rise in the overall number of calls being received in the call centre. Whilst he appreciated callers' concerns and frustrations, the Superintendent encouraged people to keep ringing until their call was answered. Chief Inspector J Wilson agreed to speak to the member of the public after the meeting regarding the suspicious van.

4.8 Response Time
Member of the Public

A member of the public referred to an occasion when she rang the police and had waited one and a half hours for Officers to respond. Superintendent D Beck stated that he would speak to the lady about that particular incident after the meeting. He pointed out that the police had lots of demands on their services, with an average of 100 calls per day, and in fact one day the previous week there had been 170 calls. The Superintendent did his best to manage the resources available to him to provide the service people needed.

5. Any Other Business

There was no other business.

Conclusion of the Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor B Hanvey, thanked those present for their attendance.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 8.58 pm.

Chairman