

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Public Meeting of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership held in Kingdom Life City Church, Graham Gardens, Lisburn, BT27 1XE on 16 August 2016 at 7.10 pm

PRESENT: Councillor S Carson (Chairman)
Alderman D Drysdale
Alderman M Henderson
Councillor U Mackin
Councillor A McIntyre
Councillor J Palmer
Councillor N Trimble
Mr M Busch
Ms Y Craig
Mr P Dean
Ms D Guy
Ms D Hancock
Ms P Leeson
Ms R Orr
Ms C McCullough

IN ATTENDANCE: Head of Central Support Services
PCSP Manager
PCSP Officer (JB)
PCSP Administrative Officer
Committee Secretary

Designated Organisations

Mr A Hannaway, Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Chief Inspector J Wilson, Police Service of Northern Ireland
Inspector A Johnston, Police Service of Northern Ireland
Mr P Thompson, Probation Board for Northern Ireland

Commencement of the Meeting

At the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor S Carson, welcomed those present to the meeting and he thanked the Kingdom Life City Church for its hospitality. He extended a particular welcome to Ms Wendy Osborne OBE, Vice Chair of the NI Policing Board's Partnership Committee, who was seated in the public gallery.

The Chairman welcomed representatives of Lisburn Commerce Against Crime who were also seated in the public gallery and advised that Mr Stanley Clements would give a presentation on a retail crime audit that was being funded by PCSP.

The Chairman referred to the PSNI report on local crime trends and stated that he was very encouraged by the reduction in domestic burglaries, anti-social behaviour and violent crime and hoped that the pattern of crime reduction would continue through the course of the year.

For the benefit of those members of the public seated in the public gallery, the members of the PCSP who were present introduced themselves.

1. Apologies

It was agreed to accept that apologies for non-attendance be recorded at the meeting on behalf of Alderman G Rice, MBE, Councillor M Tolerton, Mr A Armour (NIFRS), Mr K Doherty (Youth Justice Agency), Superintendent S Wright (PSNI) and Chief Inspector L Dobson (PSNI).

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no Declarations of Interest.

3. Presentation in respect of Retail Crime

The Chairman, Councillor S Carson, welcomed Chief Inspector John Wilson and Inspector Alexander Johnston. Inspector Johnston provided a presentation on the local district's crime prevention strategy in respect of retail theft and shop lifting. He outlined the main aspects of the strategy as follows:

Prevention:

- CCTV – latest upgrade included high definition cameras; radio link between retailers and the control room; work in progress to extend CCTV to Dundonald, Newtownbreda and Forestside
- Instructing and Educating Retailers – working with retailers to deliver practical solutions
- Signage
- Safe Shop Scheme organised by the Crime Prevention Officer

Intelligence:

- PSNI producing briefing documents in relation to ongoing thefts
- Circulation of images of prolific offenders
- Information sharing and partnership working
- Retailers against Crime briefing PSNI face to face before officers go out on patrol

Confidence and Reassurance:

- Increased visibility throughout retail areas
- Agreement with stakeholders
- Use of social media
- Proactive and targeted mini operations
- Radio Link
- PCSP and partnership working

Enforcement:

- Use of ASBOs/banning orders
- Use of fixed penalties
- Regular liaison with Lisburn CCTV
- Regular use of search powers
- Use of pro-arrest and pro-charge

The Chairman, Councillor S Carson, thanked Inspector Johnston for a very thorough presentation and welcomed questions.

3.1 Member of the Public
Discretionary Disposal of Shoplifting Instances

A member of the public enquired regarding the cost effectiveness of extending CCTV to outer areas of the district. He also enquired as to how many of those arrested for shoplifting were taken to court or were given a warning.

Inspector Johnston stated that CCTV was viewed as a protective shield and the further it could be extended across the district the better. He advised that each case of shoplifting was considered on its merits but that a first offence tended to be a fixed penalty and offenders with a history of offending were charged and brought to court subject to there being sufficient evidence available. He stated that some reoffenders were career criminals and these were the people that the police wished particularly to target. He advised that 48 young people had been referred to the Youth Diversion Officer which had a deterrent effect meaning the likelihood of them reoffending was not great.

In response to an additional query, he advised that there were over 30 CCTV cameras in Lisburn and that some of the bigger retail stores had additional cameras within the store.

3.2 Member of the Public
Admissibility of CCTV Evidence

In response to a query by a member of the public, Inspector Johnston confirmed that CCTV evidence was admissible in court and formed a large part of police evidence. He indicated that CCTV coverage could also be played back to the person being prosecuted in advance of the case coming to court.

3.3 Member of the Public
In-Store CCTV

A member of the public indicated that they worked for a major retailer at Sprucefield which had upgraded its CCTV system and now had 96 cameras in-store and liaised closely with PSNI. He stated that, over a 5 year period, approximately 400 shop lifters had been caught, one person with over £7,000 worth of stolen goods on their person.

3.4 Safe Shop Scheme

Mr Michael Green gave a short presentation on the Safe Shop Scheme. He outlined ways to identify shoplifters and the methods they used to avoid detection. He also

explained shopkeepers' rights in stopping and dealing with those suspected of shoplifting. He stated that shop staff were the best defence against shop lifters but often they were not aware of what to look for or do. He advised that the Safe Shop was a free scheme offering a bespoke training service for local shop staff and he asked the PCSP members to promote the scheme throughout the district.

(Ms Y Craig left at 7.45 pm)

3.5 Retail Crime Audit

Mr Stanley Clements thanked the PSNI for providing funding to carry out a Retail Crime Audit and thanked the Council for providing funding to integrate the CCTV systems. He stated that he had been involved with the CCTV scheme as a consultant and had been working with Lisburn Commerce against Crime for the past 6 months.

He stated that the Retail Crime Audit would address issues such as assessing the current position, identifying opportunities for further cooperation between retailers and PSNI and for partnership working. He provided some UK statistics on retail crime, for example, while customer theft had decreased by 2% over the last year, the average cost of each theft had increased by 35% to £325 per theft. He indicated that the average cost of employee theft was over £1,000 per theft. He stated however that these were national statistics and there was a lack of statistical information relating directly to the Lisburn and Castlereagh area. He stated that the Retail Crime Audit would be a value for money exercise.

The Chairman, Councillor S Carson, thanked Mr Clements for his presentation and noted that Lisburn and Castlereagh were leading the way in Northern Ireland with this initiative. He then welcomed Members' questions.

3.6 Alderman D Drysdale Theft by Employees and Cyber Crime

In response to queries by Alderman D Drysdale, Inspector Johnston stated that the PSNI statistics presented at the meeting related to shoplifting and customer theft and not to employee theft. He further advised that PSNI now had a specialist unit investigating cyber crime.

4. PSNI Report in respect of Local Crime Trends

Chief Inspector J Wilson presented a report in respect of crime statistics for the Lisburn area for the period to 1 April 2016 to 8 August 2016, a copy of which had been circulated to those attending. After presentation of the report, the Chief Inspector answered questions.

(Mr P Thompson, PBNI, left at 8.10 pm)

4.1 Member of the Public Role of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes

In response to a query by a member of the public, Chief Inspector Wilson confirmed that Neighbourhood Watch schemes had an important role in tackling crime. The Chairman,

Councillor S Carson, advised that SelectaDNA kits had recently been distributed to a number of Neighbourhood Watch Schemes in burglary hot spots. In response to a further comment, Inspector Wilson stated that he had appointed specific officers to act as points of contact with the Neighbourhood Watch co-ordinators and he would investigate why this contact was not working as effectively as it should.

4.2 Members of the Public
Support for Small Independent Shops

A member of the public stated that she was a small independent retailer in Lisburn and had never received a visit from PSNI officers giving crime prevention advice. Chief Inspector Wilson stated that he would ask beat patrols in the town centre to call into shops. Another independent retailer asked that any such visits should be extended to other retail areas like Hillsborough. Mr S Clements indicated that the Retail Crime Audit would identify and address issues relating to small independent retailers as well as the larger stores.

(Mr P Dean left at 8.25 pm)

4.3 Member of the Public
Signage relating to CCTV Cameras

In response to a query by a member of the public, Mr S Clements confirmed that retailers who installed in-store CCTV had to display signage indicating that CCTV was operating and a contact telephone number.

Alderman D Drysdale suggested that the PCSP should consider organising a number of workshops to provide retailers with crime prevention advice and training.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Member of the Public
Security Issues for Residents in Lisburn Square

The Chairman, Councillor S Carson, stated that an email had been received from a resident in Lisburn Square stating that, following the removal of a 24 hour security service at residential property in Lisburn Square, there had been increased incidents of squatting and anti-social behaviour. Chief Inspector Wilson stated that he was not aware of any such issues being reported to PSNI. He stated that issues regarding security provision should be taken up with the residents' management company and issues relating to anti-social behaviour should be reported to the police who would respond appropriately.

5.2 Councillor J Palmer
Non-Payment at Petrol Filling Stations

Councillor J Palmer welcomed the fact that PSNI were reviewing a recent proposal not to deal with incidents of people making off from petrol filling stations without paying. Chief Inspector Wilson clarified that the proposal had been that, when a garage reported someone leaving without payment, they would be given a police reference number but the call handler would then ask a number of questions to ascertain whether

a crime had taken place. He advised that, in 85% of such cases, the non-payment was a genuine mistake. If it was considered that the incident was not a crime, then the retailer would be given the driver's contact details to allow them to seek payment directly. If there was evidence of a deliberate attempt to avoid payment, then the PSNI would take appropriate action. Alderman D Drysdale pointed out that there was a cost involved to garage retailer to obtain the driver's contact details.

(Councillor A McIntyre left at 8.30 pm)

Conclusion of the Meeting

At the conclusion of the meeting, the Chairman, Councillor S Carson, thanked those present for attending and engaging with both Police and Members of the Partnership. He advised that this would be his last meeting as Chairman of the PCSP and he thanked all the members of the Partnership for their consideration and support during his term of office. He thanked the Director of Corporate Services, the Head of Central Support Services, the PCSP Manager and the PCSP Officers for their contribution to the work of the Partnership.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 8.55 pm.

Chairman