

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

**Minutes of the Meeting of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership
held remotely by zoom on Tuesday 20 April 2021 at 5.34 pm**

PRESENT:

Councillor A Swan (Chairman)
Councillor N Anderson
Councillor A Ewing
Councillor A Gowan
Councillor M Guy
Councillor A McIntyre
Councillor T Mitchell
Councillor S Skillen
Mr J Bentley
Ms G Conroy
Mrs Y Craig
Mr G Doran
Ms A Landa
Mrs P Leeson
Mr D McBurney
Ms A Twomey
Mrs P Yellamaty

IN ATTENDANCE:

Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager
PCSP Officer (JB)
PCSP Officer (SA)
Member Services Officer (CR)

Designated Organisations

Superintendent J Mullan, Police Service of Northern Ireland
Chief Inspector J Wilson, Police Service of Northern Ireland
Mr D Marley, Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Mr J Crymble, Education Authority
Mr K Wilkinson, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service
Ms F McKibbin, Probation Board for Northern Ireland

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chairman, Councillor A Swan, welcomed everyone to the meeting, which was being held via zoom due to the current Covid-19 restrictions.

1. **Apologies**

It was agreed to accept an apology for non-attendance at the meeting on behalf of Ms J Harkness, Youth Justice Agency.

2. Minutes

It was agreed by the Partnership that the Minutes of the Private Meeting of the PCSP held on 16 March, 2021 be confirmed and signed.

3. Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

4. Report of the Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager

It was agreed that the report and recommendations of the Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager be adopted, subject to any decisions recorded below, and other items noted.

4.1 Update from Statutory Organisations

Representatives from Statutory Organisations having been asked to provide updates on the work of their respective organisations with regards to community safety priorities, the following updates were provided:

Update from Chief Inspector J Wilson, PSNI

Chief Inspector J Wilson advised that, since the last meeting of the Partnership, year end figures had been produced for the 2020/21 financial year. He pointed out that these were in the process of being validated and would be confirmed in due course. Overall for the district, there had been a reduction in crime of just over 10%; the crime clearance rate had increased by approximately 1.5%. There had been a marked reduction of approximately 50% in burglary overall over the past year and a slight increase in the number of elderly victims of crime. Police were continuing to engage with elderly victims of crime to provide the support they needed. The last year had seen a marked increase in antisocial behaviour – around 40% when Covid-related matters were included and around 27% without those. Chief Inspector Wilson advised that, together with the PCSP, Parks & Amenities and other statutory and voluntary organisations, consideration was being given to diversionary work that could take place over the summer period to help with antisocial behaviour. In terms of policing response, Officers continued to pay attention to hotspot areas at weekends.

There was an ongoing focus on drugs-related matter and the last year had seen an increase in drug seizures. Officers continued to carry out proactive searches and, just within the last week, one such search had resulted in the seizure of a large sum of cash.

Roads safety remained a prevalent issue. There had been a number of bad road traffic collisions, some resulting in fatalities and serious injuries, and Officers continued to run a number of road safety operations to try to address this issue and get the safety message out to motorists.

Update from Chief Inspector J Wilson, PSNI (Contd)

Superintendent J Mullan referred to current protests that had been taking place across the province. There had been concern the previous week about one planned in the Longstone Street area of Lisburn. However, with a lot of engagement and partnership working to try to keep tensions in the area low, the protest had not escalated into a serious issue. In response to a query from Councillor M Guy regarding how the PSNI would manage any future protests, the Superintendent stated that early engagement was key to ensure everyone's safety.

Councillor M Guy, on behalf of the Alliance Party, stated how sorry she was to learn of the attack on a PSNI Officer earlier in the day. Councillor S Skillen concurred with these sentiments.

Councillor S Skillen stated that she had been in contact with a representative from Rangers Soccer Academy who was keen to engage with the PSNI and PCSP regarding setting up cross-community programmes for young people, such as midnight soccer, in the Lisburn/Castlereagh area over the summer period, which could be a problematic time. It was proposed by Councillor Skillen, seconded by Councillor N Anderson and agreed that this matter be explored with Rangers Soccer Academy. A number of Members spoke in support of this proposal and Ms A Twomey stressed that this should be a cross-community piece of work, done by reaching out to local football teams, schools, etc. Ms A Landa stated that, having previously been involved with Grassroots Football, she would be able to provide contacts that may be of assistance in progressing this matter.

Councillor A Gowan put on record his thanks to Officers in the Rural Policing Team who were very responsive when contacted. He also thanked the PCSP Officers and the Crime Prevention Officer for having facilitated a zoom workshop the previous week in the Downshire East area.

Update from Mr J Crymble, Education Authority

Mr J Crymble advised that, from 1 April, 2021, Youth Service had started face-to-face provision following lockdown. Whilst aiming for a blended approach, the ultimate goal was to have as many people back as possible. There was currently a cap on numbers – generic provision (eg. in youth clubs) was a maximum of 15 young people plus staff; for more targeted work, which would be in smaller venues, there would be a maximum of 10 young people. Contact and structured sports were still not permitted but it was hoped that would change very soon to allow young people to play football and other sports. Youth Service had responded to recent unrest at local protests and Mr Crymble passed on thanks to voluntary partners who had stepped up with a quick response at this time. Youth Services staff had engaged with young people to talk about the risks, not necessarily of attending a protest, but the consequences of getting swept up in what could happen at those protests. Youth Service had been fortunate to receive additional funding for some youth projects across the area to target young people most at risk. Youth Service had a strong relationship with the PCSP, PSNI and voluntary organisations. On average 3-4 teams were out each Friday and Saturday evening, targeting hotspots and engaging with youths.

Update from Mr J Crymble, Education Authority (Contd)

Mr Crymble stated that another key action was the Youth Volunteer Academy, which was about to be recruited, and which targeted the most vulnerable young people at risk of becoming involved in crime.

Update from Mr D Marley, Northern Ireland Housing Executive

Mr D Marley advised that year end figures had shown only 58 reported cases of antisocial behaviour for the last year. However, he pointed out that this was unlikely to be a true reflection of what had been going on, given that Patch Managers had not been on site and Neighbourhood Wardens had not been out in the area. It was expected that antisocial behaviour figures would increase once there was a presence of those staff in the community again. Consideration was currently being given to a return to work and how staff could gradually be returned to offices and out into estates. There would be a blended approach to this. Mr Marley stated that there continued to be pressures on services, due to constraints on hostel accommodation and social distancing etc. In terms of general housing services, there were still backlogs in relation to the delivery of response to maintenance services and schemes that were on site but not running at full capacity. Significant progress was being made and it was hoped to put this right in the coming months. The new Community Safety and Community Cohesion Grant Application system had been launched earlier today and could be found on the NIHE website.

Update from Ms F McKibbin, Probation Board for Northern Ireland

Ms F McKibbin advised that the PBNi was working towards a blended approach as it moved into phase 2 of its recovery plan. There was an increase in the number of clients being brought into buildings and high risk offenders continued to be seen. All other programme work continued to be done by telephone contact. In response to a query by Councillor N Anderson about programme work for people on probation, Ms McKibbin advised that, depending on the offence, there were a number of individual programmes offered and she went on to outline what those were. At the request of Councillor Anderson, Ms McKibbin agreed to liaise with him after the meeting in relation to the possibility of considering the use of drama programmes in future.

Update from Mr K Wilkinson, Northern Ireland Fire & Rescue Service

Mr K Wilkinson advised that the NIFRS had earlier today launched the School Talks Programme for primary 5 pupils. This programme would traditionally have taken place face-to-face, but this year was taking place virtually. There had been issues with fire-fighters being attacked during recent unrest and teams of Officers had been out speaking to community representatives to discuss why that had been the case. The NIFRS was still doing its core duty of fire calls but was carrying out a reduced public service with regard to protection and prevention duties.

4.2 Participatory Budgeting (PB) – Grand Choice

The Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager reported that, further to the proposal presented to the Partnership last month, a number of changes had been made to the Grand Choice scheme at Council Committee level. This scheme would now be taken forward in 3 DEAs during 2021/22 and the remaining 3 in 2022/23, prior to the next local government elections. This would be undertaken in partnership with the Council and other partners and amended to take account of the ongoing restrictions, particularly the inability to meet indoors in large numbers at this time. The Corporate Services Committee had agreed that the next PB event would be in an urban community, open to consideration to the order of participation. In line with that decision and pending Council approval, the three DEAs to host the PB initiatives in this financial year were Castlereagh East and Castlereagh South (commencing April 2021) and Downshire West (date to be confirmed during second half of 2021/22). Each DEA would have a total funding application of £15,000 and the maximum eligible award per application would be £1,000.

It was noted that the Castlereagh East and Castlereagh South events would be delivered in an entirely online format and, subject to the relaxation of restrictions, Downshire West would take place later in the year in a 'marketplace' format, otherwise it would be delivered online. Killultagh would not be included as the pilot had been run in that area last year. Councillor A P Ewing commended staff for organising these events online.

4.3 Project Support Programme – 2021/22 – Proposed Timescales

The Partnership was advised that the Project Support Programme would be launched on 10 May, with the closing date for applications being 4 June, 2021. Members were provided with, and noted the contents of, a copy of the application form.

4.4 Applications for Funding

The Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager reported that the following applications for funding had been received and, in the absence of a meeting, approval had been granted by the Chairman, Councillor A Swan:

- PSNI Reducing Offending Unit – Supporting a Young Offender
April – May 2021 - £220.00
- St Joseph's Primary School, Lisburn – Safety Signs
April – May 2021 - £485.98
- Glenavy Community Partnership – Hurling Project
April – December 2021 - £500.00

It was proposed by Councillor N Anderson, seconded by Councillor T Mitchell and agreed that retrospective approval be given to the above.

4.5 Hourglass Northern Ireland

The Acting PCSP/Member Services Manager reported that Hourglass, formerly Action on Elder Abuse, had made contact with the Council to advise of its

4.5 Hourglass Northern Ireland (Contd)

provision in Northern Ireland. It was the only charity dedicated to addressing harm and abuse of older people and promoting safer ageing for all. It provided Northern Ireland's only dedicated helpline for those experiencing, or concerned about, harm, abuse or exploitation of older people. While the Covid-19 pandemic had had an undoubtable impact on the whole population, older people had been disproportionately affected by the virus and resulting issues. Demand for Hourglass services had increased significantly and required a change to meet the urgent needs of older people during these challenging times.

Research had shown that, in Northern Ireland, 68,000 older people had been subject to abuse. This was not a new issue but one that had now reached a critical threshold that could no longer be ignored nor tolerated. Public attitudes appeared to be fuelling the crisis, with 1 in 3 people (34%) failing to recognise older people as victims of domestic abuse and over a third (36%) not considering that 'inappropriate sexual acts directed at older people' counted as abuse. Likewise, nearly 1 in 3 (31%) did not view 'pushing, hitting or beating an older person' as abuse, while a third (33%) did not recognise 'taking precious items from an older relative's home without asking' as abuse. These results were genuinely shocking and the figures highlighted the true scale of the crisis, especially in Northern Ireland.

Members were provided with a copy of the calling card for Hourglass which had been posted on the PCSP and Council Facebook pages. It was agreed that Hourglass be involved in the themed public meeting due to be held in Autumn 2021.

5. Any Other Business

5.1 Provision of CCTV Cameras in Castlereagh
Councillor S Skillen

Councillor S Skillen referred to the good work carried out by Citywatch in Lisburn, but commented on the lack of CCTV cameras in Castlereagh. She recognised that such cameras came at a considerable cost and proposed that a report be drawn up on the possibility of working with the Council, PSNI and other agencies to have cameras installed in Castlereagh. This proposal was seconded by Councillor N Anderson and agreed. Superintendent J Mullan advised that she had been in contact with the Citywatch Manager regarding potential funding and would provide an update in this regard in due course.

5.2 Speeding in Moneyreagh and Crossnacreevy
Councillor M Guy

Councillor M Guy, on behalf of Councillor M Gregg, referred to speeding in Moneyreagh and Crossnacreevy and asked what measures were being taken to reduce speeds as Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) were not having an impact. Chief Inspector J Wilson advised that data from SIDs was used to target road safety action. Whilst the police could undertake short-term enforcement action,

5.2 Speeding in Moneyreagh and Crossnacreevy (Contd)
Councillor M Guy

the provision of longer term traffic calming measures was responsibility of the Department for Infrastructure.

Councillor T Mitchell stated that the SID at Moneyreagh had been relocated and was not as effective as it had been in its original location. He asked if the device could be moved back to where it had been. Councillor S Skillen concurred with these comments.

5.3 Death of Mr David Edwards in Road Traffic Accident
Mr D McBurney

Mr D McBurney referred to the recent death of Mr David Edwards in a road traffic accident in Moira. Mr Edwards' family had asked that Mr McBurney convey to the PSNI how comforting and compassionate the attending Officers had been. Superintendent J Mullan appreciated those comments and agreed to pass them to the Officers involved.

Councillor A P Ewing also expressed his condolences on the death of Mr Edwards, whom he had known personally.

5.4 Speeding in Housing Estates
Councillor A Gowan

Councillor A Gowan stated that he had received complaints from residents in housing estates, eg. Hillhall, where, whilst the speed limit was 30mph, driving at that speed would pose a risk to children. Councillor Gowan asked that attention be paid by the police to considerate driving in housing estates.

5.5 Report on Speed Indicator Devices
Councillor A Gowan

Councillor A Gowan having requested an update regarding a report that was to have been done in relation to SIDs, the Chairman, Councillor A Swan, advised that this was due to be presented to the Partnership in June.

5.6 Speed Indicator Device Statistics – Dromara and Dundrod
Councillor A P Ewing

Councillor A P Ewing referred to issues that meant SIDs in Dromara and Dundrod were not picking up data. The PCSP Officer, Mr J Bingham, advised that data from SIDs was back-up on iCloud. The SIDs in Dromara and Dundrod had not been working but both were now operational again and data could be retrieved from the system. This information would be available for review at the June meeting.

5.7 Thanks to PSNI Officers
Chairman, Councillor A Swan

The Chairman, Councillor A Swan, having advised that he had recently been the victim of a burglary, thanked Police Officers who had attended for the highly-efficient manner in which they had dealt with the matter.

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 6.22 pm.

Chairman