

LISBURN & CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership (Policing Committee) held in Maghaberry Primary School, Maghaberry, on Tuesday 20 November 2018, at 7.01 pm

PRESENT:

Mrs Y Craig (Vice-Chairman)
Alderman M Henderson MBE
Councillor A Ewing
Councillor B Mallon
Councillor A McIntyre
Councillor T Mitchell
Councillor J Palmer
Councillor R Walker
Mr M Busch
Mr P Dean
Ms D Hancock

OTHER MEMBERS:

Alderman J Tinsley

IN ATTENDANCE:

PCSP Manager
PCSP Officer
Member Services Officer
PCSP Admin Officer

Chief Inspector L Dobson, Police Service of Northern Ireland
Sergeant F Lockhart, Police Service of Northern Ireland

Commencement of the Meeting

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor B Hanvey, the Vice-Chairman, Mrs Y Craig, took to the chair by welcoming everyone to the meeting and thanked them for their attendance. She proceeded by outlining the evacuation procedures and asked that everyone switch their mobile phones to silent mode.

The Vice-Chairman Mrs Y Craig advised those present on the makeup of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership and provided a brief summary of the six monthly report from the PSNI in respect of policing of the district. This included statistics on violence against the person, theft, drugs and road traffic casualties by injury and stated that collisions were usually caused by drivers not paying attention and use of mobile phones whilst driving. She further advised that there would be an opportunity at the end of the PSNI presentation to ask questions.

1. **Apologies**

It was agreed that apologies be recorded on behalf of the Chairman, Councillor B Hanvey, Councillor S Carson, Head of Business and Democratic Services, Mrs P Leeson and Mr S McDowell, Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service.

2. Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest made.

Councillor T Mitchell arrived at 7.04 pm.

3. PSNI Six Monthly Report in respect of Policing of the District

Members had been furnished with a copy of the Lisburn & Castlereagh District Performance against the Policing Plan of which figures had been extracted on the 8 November, 2018. Chief Inspector L Dobson highlighted the salient points within the report which were as follows:

- Officers received 24524 calls in six months which had been an increase of 1200 calls compared with last year.
- Officers with less than two years' experience are known as Probationary Officers, 55% of the workforce in this district are Probationary Officers.
- Domestic Violence crimes totalled were 691 which indicated 172 more people asking for help.
- Violence without Injury/Harassment – 276 reported crimes had been received via social media (snapchat, facebook etc.) where harassment is not face to face. For every harassment crime two crimes were recorded one for harassment and one for miscellaneous communications.
- Sexual offences – A total of 142 sexual offence crimes had been reported during the six month period, 29 of these crimes were rape allegations whilst 11 were historical allegations.
- Burglary – An increase of 18 more homes and businesses had been reported compared to the previous year. The PSNI is working hard with various groups to reduce these crimes.
- Theft offences increased by 97 crimes. A new scheme introduced last year in relation to officers not responding to bilking whereby the majority of incidents turn out to be people genuinely forgetting to pay for their fuel, whilst officers are not attending, incidents numbers are still provided and therefore are being recorded as crimes.
- Driving offences increased by 39.
- Outcome Rate of 28.7% had improved compared to 35.5% last year.
- Road traffic casualties – 2 less people died within the district compared to last year.
- A Speed Indicator Device had been placed in Maghaberry which gathers information of the miles per hour vehicles pass and if they slow down.
- Chief Inspector L Dobson informed members that Lisburn Neighbourhood Policing Team were engaged with a number of groups and organisations such as the Northern Ireland Housing Executive, Community Associations, St Marks Parish Senior Citizens, Seymour Hill Steering Group, Old Warren Men's Shed, bonfires multi-agency and many more groups in order to address critical issues arising in communities and to improve security and facilities in local areas to help keep people safe.
- Anti-Social Behaviour crimes had seen a slight decrease overall. Downshire West reported 170, Moria reported 57, Killultagh 144 and Maghaberry 24.

- Crime Prevention advice had been provided at various events covering issues on internet safety, scams by both internet and telephone and cold callers and the use of visual impaired goggles had been worn to demonstrate a powerful and fun way to show how drinking excess alcohol causes visual distortion and lack of control.
- The percentage of interaction with crime victims met in 10 Days was 96.4% while 3.6% of crime victims not met in 10 days related to records being updated late.
- Prevent & Deter Scheme works with young persons who have come to the attention of agencies such as Youth Justice Agency and Social Services through anti-social behaviour crimes. With the help of the PCSP funding eight juveniles participated in a Prevent and Deter Scheme that took part across the City area in order to help change their direction in life.
- Reducing Offending Unit aimed to reduce harm caused to communities by robust management on prolific offenders and seeks to maximise opportunities to rehabilitate offenders and prevent young people becoming involved in crime. Over the six month period 22 offenders were managed, 30 offender arrests were made by the Reducing Offending Unit, 5 offenders reduced offending and the number of anti-social behaviour offenders was 1.

Aldermen M Henderson and J Tinsley entered the meeting at 7.08 pm.

At the conclusion of the presentation the following questions were raised and responses made:

4. Questions

4.1 Member of the Public
Text Alerts

A member of the public stated that the system for text alerts had not been working effectively claiming that he rarely received updates and found that facebook posts provided him with updates of events within hours of happening. He further asked how many Churches were visited within the district to obtain up-to-date contact details in order to establish good lines of communication.

Chief Inspector L Dobson responded that text alerts are sent according to area and although she had not collated exact statistics on how many Churches had been contacted she did confirm that every Church within the Lisburn and Castlereagh area had been sent a letter. She further added that although she found a real willingness to engage, the same people are not always able to attend meetings due to other responsibilities and commitments.

4.2 Member of the Public
Neighbourhood Watch Signs

A member of the public stated that he had felt let down in having requested neighbourhood watch signs back in May and it was only when he approached an elected Member his request had been actioned within a matter of weeks.

4.3 Member of the Public

Qualifying Officers

A member of the public thanked Chief Inspector L Dobson for her informative presentation and proceeded to quote the high percentage of probationary officers and queried if this posed a safety risk and could resources be shared across the region. She further presented questions to the Chief Inspector in relation to workforce planning and risk assessments being carried out and stated that from the figures provided and changes made in monitoring activities it had made it difficult to follow, with her final point being if the Chief Inspector felt that the targets set were reasonable.

Chief Inspector L Dobson responded that other districts currently sat with 40% of Probationary Officers and officers would need to apply for a transfer to move to another district and only when a position becomes available would it be viable. She also stated that they were a victim of their own success as officers cover a wide range of activities and experiences which provides them with opportunities to move their careers on. The Chief Inspector explained that whilst targets are provided by the Home Office the rules can change from year to year on what information to record and further added that the clearance rate for crimes this year was the best ever considering the challenges faced. Targets are kept under review and officers are engaged and committed to doing their best.

4.4 Member of the Public
Clearance Rate

A member of the public asked how the clearance rate compared across the UK and was advised by Chief Inspector L Dobson that the clearance rate compared favourably with the UK which sat between 27-30%.

4.5 Member of the Public
Domestic Violence

A member of the public queried if the Domestic Violence Liaison Officer accompanied officers on duty.

Chief Inspector L Dobson confirmed that there was a representative from Women's Aid based at Lisburn Station who provides officers with support and confirmed that she has made joint visits with officers but this can only be done with the consent of the victim.

4.6 Mr M Busch
PSNI Duty Snapshot

Mr M Busch stated that he supported and appreciated the work of the PSNI within the community and further added to have an appreciation suggested if the PSNI would provide a picture snapshot of 100 officers and the different duties/challenges they would face on a daily basis.

Chief Inspector L Dobson replied that she would provide a snapshot picture at the next meeting of the committee.

4.7 Councillor J Palmer

Speed Indicator Devices

Councillor J Palmer advised that he was pleased to see speed indicator devices in Anahilt and Maghaberry and queried if it would be a good idea to approach the Department for Infrastructure for additional funding as he would like to see more speed indicator devices in rural villages.

The Vice-Chairman Ms Y Craig confirmed that three more speed indicator devices were being purchased within this financial year.

4.8 Member of the Public
Absenteeism

A member of the public noted that the statistics provided did not include absenteeism for the PSNI and queried what mechanisms were in place to support officers back to work.

Chief Inspector L Dobson responded that although absenteeism figures had not been provided at the meeting she was aware that absence had slightly increased due to a number of maternity related absences was managed through occupational health in order to support officers with a safe return to work.

4.9 Councillor A McIntyre
'No Grey Zone' Sexual Consent Campaign

Councillor A McIntyre queried if the PSNI plan to hold any engagements in relation to 'No Grey Zone' Sexual Consent Campaign.

Chief Inspector L Dobson replied that she wasn't aware of any plans as yet.

4.10 Councillor A Ewing
Burglaries

Councillor A Ewing addressed his concerns in relation to the level of violence used during aggravated burglaries and acknowledge that whilst this type of burglary was quite isolated he was concerned of the potential opportunities the darker evenings could bring.

Chief Inspector L Dobson agreed that whilst the number of aggravated burglaries was relatively small the impact of such burglaries was huge and informed the committee that 30% of burglaries still continue to occur due to unlocked windows and doors.

4.11 Member of the Public
Speed Indicator Devices

A member of the public queried if it was possible to build into the speed indicator devices a system that could track and record car registration numbers for vehicles that don't slowdown in order to prosecute. He further queried if the speed indicator devices could be monitored on a weekly basis.

The Vice-Chairman Mrs Y Craig responded that the devices were for the use of gathering activity information and a deterrent for speeding in order to encourage prevention. She further added that the speed indicator devices were operational from August and therefore it was a bit early to compare information.

Chief Inspector L Dobson further responded that villages do not have the same stretch of road to capture the information that could be captured on fixed cameras and that the PSNI would not have the resource to place officers daily to carry out speed operations across rural areas.

4.12 Member of the Public
Cinema Car Park

A member of the public addressed that parking tickets had been issued to people who had overstayed the duration at the cinema car park and queried if these tickets were legal.

Chief Inspector L Dobson responded that the car park was privately owned and advised the member of the public to seek legal advice.

4.13 Member of the Public
Number of Crimes Reported

A member of the public queried if the number of crimes reported were created by local people or by people outside the area.

Chief Inspector L Dobson replied that she did not have this detail.

5. Any Other Business

There being no further business, the meeting was terminated at 8.15 pm.

Chairman