

Fermanagh and Omagh District Council
Fermanagh and Omagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership

Policing Committee Meeting

Minutes of the Fermanagh and Omagh Policing and Community Safety Partnership Policing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 25 May 2021 at 7.30 pm via MS Teams.

Present: **Councillors**
John McClaughry (Chairperson), Paul Blake, Josephine Deehan, Stephen Donnelly, Keith Elliott, Tommy Maguire, Barry McElduff, Thomas O'Reilly and Allan Rainey.

Independent Members
Monica Coyle (Vice-Chairperson), Norman Kirkpatrick, Vida Lake, Bernie McCrory, Margaret McCrory, Maria Thompson and Pauline Treacy.

Designated Members
Superintendent Alywin Barton (PSNI) and Chief Inspector Robert McGowan.

Apologies: Councillor Deborah Erskine and Oonagh McAvinue (NIHE).

In attendance: Carol Follis (PCSP Manager) and Maggie McManus (PCSP Clerk).

PC 01/21 **Welcome and Apologies**
The Chairperson welcomed Members to the meeting and apologies were accepted.

The Chair passed on condolences to the family and colleagues of the late Jean Holmes, PSNI, on her recent passing.

PC 02/21 **Declarations of Interest**
No declarations of interest were declared.

PC 03/21 **Notification of AOB**
PCSP Manager – administration update.

PC 04/21 **Minutes**
The minutes of the Policing Committee meeting held on Tuesday 23 March 2021 were considered and approved. Proposed by Cllr Rainey and seconded by Cllr O'Reilly.

PC 05/21 **Matters Arising**

PC 34/20 PSNI Vulnerability Team
The PCSP Manager emailed the Members a copy of Inspector Beatty's Vulnerability Team presentation and the Support Hub Evaluation.

The PCSP Manager informed Members that the promotion of DVADS with Women's Aid will be part of the awareness

programme and will be reported to Members as an activity report.

PC 35/20 AOB

The PCSP Manager informed that a DSV Task & Finish Group has been established and it met on 27/04/2021. Activity will be reported back to Members.

The PCSP Manager informed that the letter of Support for ECDT was issued.

PC 06/20

Members' Questions

The following 2 questions were received on Monday 24/05/2021, responses were given during the meeting by Superintendent Barton.

Question 1

Cllr McElduff: To seek a PSNI assessment, update or explanation for a number of hidden surveillance cameras located variously this month in the Mid Tyrone and West Tyrone areas within the Omagh District, i.e. their legal status, nature of agency involved etc? Local people are disturbed at several recent finds and feel this to be a most sinister development.

Response

First may I assure the Councillor that these cameras are nothing to do with Policing. This issue was raised with us 2 weeks ago and I am aware the person raising it at that time, a different elected representative, was fully briefed on who owned the cameras and that they were a 24-hour survey by NIE. This was a legitimate business process with the cameras legally erected. It was disappointing that community concerns were not addressed when this information was provided as I believe the information I have just shared, which was known by the elected representative would have been very helpful to the affected communities. It is also concerning that we have heard but not received a formal complaint to the effect that at least 6 of these cameras were missing when the company returned to retrieve them. I very much appreciate Councillor McElduff raising this issue tonight, it is this type of mature discussion which ensured communities are reassured as opposed to conspiracy theories being given fertile ground on which to grow.

Question 2

Cllr McElduff: How is the issue of the safety of neighbours considered when bail addresses are agreed and when PSNI input or advice is sought in such court hearings?

Response

Thank you for this question, I understand the point Councillor McElduff is making and subscribe entirely to his desire to ensure the safety of others is not compromised by using addresses in some areas for those released on bail. The conditions to be met by courts when seeking to remand in custody are suitably stringent to protect the human rights of individuals as remand is further removing liberty. Therefore, when a court or police custody seek an address to release a person to, we undergo detailed

considerations involving the nature of the offending, the history of the individual, the impact on the victim and the risk to the community. I am aware of a recent incident where a person was released but not actually involving bail, this may be relevant to the Councillors question however it did not involve decision making by anyone in this district and has been referred to the Police Ombudsman therefore making it impossible for me to discuss further.

PC 07/21

12-month report on the delivery of the Local Policing Plan 2020-2021

Superintendent Barton gave a presentation on the Delivery of the Local Policing Plan for 2020-2021.

Following the presentation, the Members were invited to put forward questions.

Question 1

Cllr O'Reilly:

- With weapon crime incidents increasing from 36-41, what percentage is due to knife crime?
- With a number brothels being detected in District, is people trafficking issue being fully investigated?
- Are there any statistics on percentage of crimes leading to convictions, i.e. the success rate? Also is it the same offenders coming through the system? Do incidents get handed to PPS and not fed back to local Districts?

Responses

- As reported earlier in the year, most knife crime crimes are domestic weapons. The increase is accounted for in the change in the definition of a weapon, e.g. fork, rolling pins, gardening tools, crowbars, spades etc.
- We are undertaking proactive work regarding brothels, responding to reports as quickly as possible. The prime concern is the vulnerability of women and girls and we welcome any information from members regarding this issue.
- It may be beneficial for the regional group, Reducing Offending Partnership Group, who work with prolific offenders to deliver a presentation to members. Does not have figures with him but will forward to PCSP Manager for dissemination.

Question 2

Cllr Deehan:

- What support is there at a regional level to tackle human trafficking?
- How do you identify who to stop and search? Do you use drugs dogs?

Responses

- There are several different approaches, people within crime operation departments working with international contacts. There is a Cross Border Joint Agency Taskforce which has a human trafficking section.
- The search operations reported in the presentation relate to premises searches. The District has one of the lowest ratios per head of person searches.

Question 3

Cllr Rainey:

- Are the issues in West Tyrone due to lack of patrolling or lack of resources?
- What is attracting large groups of young/underage people to drink in pub in Fintona?

Responses

- Every morning PSNI Chief Superintendent/Inspectors chair a meeting to focus on incidents from the previous day/weekend, drills into detail of incidents and additional action to be taken. PSNI use Preventative Protective Patrolling and Tyrone NPTs are fully resourced at present.
- Cannot comment on issue in Fintona as it is an ongoing case. Young people will go where they will get served and communicate their own networks to meet up in groups. There is a good level of patrolling in the West Tyrone.

Question 4

Cllr McElduff:

- How many Covid fines have been issued over the last year? What are the criteria for issuing a fine?
- Are we feeling the loss of community programmes such as The Breakthrough Programme?
- When is ASB determined a crime?

Responses

- Will forward report to PCSP Manager on the number of Covid fines issue, to be issued to Members.
- Yes, definitely feeling the loss of community projects, it has changed the way people lead their lives. It will be interesting to see how social behaviours will change for people.
- It is a fine line, e.g. harassment can lead to disorderly behaviour. PSNI being proactive, arresting for breaches of the peace, education regarding what is acceptable.

Comments

Cllr O'Reilly congratulated the PSNI on a major drug find in Newtownbutler recently. He also paid tribute to Constable Sarah Tierney on her delivery of a 3-day Drugs Awareness programme at St Kevin's College, Lisnaskea.

Response

Superintendent Barton will pass this on to Sarah.

The Chair thanked Superintendent Barton for a good and easy to follow presentation, and for answers to the questions which followed.

Recommended

1. That Superintendent Barton forward statistics on crime outcomes to the PCSP Manager.
2. That the Reducing Offending Partnership Group presentation to be included in a future PCSP/PC Meeting. Proposed by Cllr O'Reilly and seconded by Cllr McClaughry.

3. That Superintendent Barton forward the 6-month report brief, which analyses the stop and search figures to the PCSP Manager.
4. That a presentation from Crime Branch on human trafficking be included in a future PCSP/PC meeting. Proposed by Cllr Deehan and seconded by Cllr Rainey.
5. That Superintendent Barton forward a report on the number of Covid fines issued and the criteria for issuing fines to the PCSP Manager.

PC 08/21

AOB

PCSP Administration

The PSCP Manager:

1. Announced that Cllr Keith Elliott will be the new PCSP Chair, taking over during the PCSP Meeting on 22 June 2021.
2. Informed Members that it is planned to have the PCSP meeting on 22 June 2021 face-to-face, with refreshments at 6.00 pm followed by the meeting at 7.30 pm. This will depend on restrictions being lifted, social distancing and relevant risk assessments.
3. Reminded Independent Members to put their names, for Vice Chair, forward as soon as possible for voting on 22 June 2021.
4. Reminded members that monthly claim forms must be completed and returned now later than 15th of the following month. There are no exceptions to this.
5. Thanked all Members for their patience, understanding and support in moving to a virtual platform, to keep our business going.

Rising

The Committee rose at 9.02pm

Date/time of next meeting

Policing Committee Meeting Tuesday 26 October 2021 at 7.30 pm.