# Minutes of
# Policing and Community Safety Partnership Meeting
# Policing Committee

**Derry City and Strabane District Council**
**Tuesday 27 January 2026**
**Council Chamber, Strabane at 10.00am**

**Present:** Cathal Crumley, Ald Keith Kerrigan (Chair), Patrick McGonagle, Ald Niree McMorris, Cllr Antaine Ó'Fearghail, Cllr Martin Reilly, Alison Wallace and Linda Watson.

PSNI: Supt Claire Hamilton, Chief Supt Gillian Kearney, Chief Insp Cathal Pearce, and Const Gemma Stone.

**In Attendance:** Aileen Murphy (Project Co-ordinator), and Vanessa Russell (PCSP Manager).

**PCPM 01/26** **Apologies**

Ciara Bond, Marie Brown, Karl Duncan, Cllr Fergal Leonard, David Jackson, Cllr Christopher Jackson, Cllr Emma McGinley, and Karen McLaughlin.

**PCPM 02/26** **Chairperson's Business**

The Chair welcomed all members to the January 2026 PCSP Policing Committee Meeting.

The Chair extended sympathy to Ciara Bond on the death of her mother-in-law.

**PCPM 03/26** **Approval of Minutes of PCSP Meeting on 25/11/25**

The minutes of the previous PCSP Meeting (DSPCSP 49/25 – 59/25) were approved as follows:

**Proposed by:** Cllr Niree McMorris
**Seconded by:** Alison Wallace

**PCPM 04/26** **Matters Arising**

There were no matters arising.

**PCPM 05/26** **Presentation of Police Performance Report Q3**

Chief Supt Gillian Kearney introduced Supt Claire Hamilton and stated she was grateful to have her on the team. Supt Hamilton previously worked in West Belfast. She is currently visiting various locations to meet with teams across the district.

Chief Supt Gillian Kearney presented the PSNI Performance Report.

**OUTCOME 1 – PSNI is Victim Focussed**

**Indicators** – Violence Against Women & Girls; Domestic Abuse; Victim Satisfaction; and Repeat Victims.

**Responses included** – **Theme 1** – Build Trust and Confidence; **Theme 2** – Safer Spaces; **Theme 3** – Relentless Perpetrator Pursuit.

**Outcome 1 - Questions/Issues Raised:**

**Domestic Abuse Incidents** – Cllr Niree McMorris welcomed Supt Claire Hamilton to the Team and wished her well in the post. She stated it was great to hear that figures were going down. The issue was concerning for everyone in society.

She referred to women who had been in contact with her, in relation to lights out within the subways in the Waterside, where it is pitch black and it is part of the commute to hospital. People have slept rough in this location in the past. It took NIE a week to get lighting fixed; collaboration is required to get this sorted in future. Women are currently feeling vulnerable.

**EVAWG** – Alison Wallace commended the work of EVAWG Officers and said they had made a difference. Action Plans are being drawn up by Local Growth Partnerships therefore it is a good time to look at how positive collaborative work can make use of the funding available. She stated this could be investigated further.

**Lighting in Waterside area** – Cllr Martin Reilly agreed with comments above re lighting being out in the Waterside and agreed working in partnership to solve the issue would be best. It is a DfI issue with policing implications.

**Social Media (X & AI) -** Cllr Reilly referred to the debate around social media, particularly, X, where images can be altered. Young people need to be aware of AI which can be used for this purpose. PSNI were asked if they could raise awareness on the issue.

**PSNI**

**EVAWG Programme** – the Chair referred to the extensive programme of EVAWG focused engagement and safeguarding activity being rolled out in four schools within the City. He asked if there were plans to roll it out in rural schools in the district?

**PSNI**

**Outcome 1 - Response** –

**Lighting in Waterside & Launch of 'Walk and Talks'** – Chief Supt Kearney stated she was not aware of the issue re lights in Waterside. She stated that PSNI were hoping to launch 'Walk and Talks', re things that are going on. (Josie and the Team are involved in this). It becomes identifiable for organisation and partners.

After incidents in parks in 2024 we were not aware of issues that made people feel unsafe. We cannot fix it, but PSNI can speak to partners to try to help. If issues are known to PSNI then passing patrols can be made aware.

The 'Walk and Talks' idea was used in Ballymena, after the riots. At the root of it was that women did not feel safe. When PSNI worked with them things such as lighting, hedges cut, etc, were discussed and dealt with. Chief Supt Kearney suggested that it would be good to have PCSP Members and Councillors to come along for the walks.

**Funding** – Chief Supt Kearney agreed with the funding issue and stated Supt Claire Hamilton would work with Alison Wallace on that. She said it was best to make use of the money that was available.

**Social Media** – Chief Supt Kearney stated that re social media funding had been secured for the campaign, 'Power to Change', which would take place going into Phase 2. It was confirmed it would be rolled out in March/April 2026. Education is key to establishments and parents; it was confirmed that tool kits would be provided for schools.

Corporate Communications roll out a lot of messaging and engagements with schools, etc. EVAWG Team are working on this. It is a real issue and people need to be aware of how dangerous it is to give young people mobiles without controls at a young age. It

should also be rolled out across rural schools; Supt Claire Hamilton will look at this.

**PSNI**

**OUTCOME 2 – We Have Safe and Engaged Communities with Confidence in Policing**

**Outcome 2 - Questions/Issues Raised:**

**Drug Seizure** – Ald McMorris commended PSNI on the drug seizure mentioned within the report. Drugs impact within the City is shocking; those involved need to be brought to justice.

**Roadside Testing** – Alison Wallace queried if roadside testing was carried out randomly. She stated it was worrying that 50% of those tested were testing positive.

**Drugs** - Patsy McGonagle agreed with previous comment and of young people being dragged into the drugs scene. Names are circulating about who is bringing in the drugs, but these people are not touched. The perception is that if you are further up the chain, you become more anonymous with the PSNI. There needs to be more public action on this.

Cathal Crumley thanked PSNI for the report and wished Supt Claire Hamilton good luck in her new position. The success of drug seizures is positive when they are heavily ingrained in society. Criminal gangs are responsible for importation of drugs and use it as a masquerade for other things, as well as political groups and organisations. A huge problem is that they are exploiting young people and children; Cathal Crumley stated he got reports of young people gathering pallets in the dead of winter. It is all connected to the wider network of drug dealing, selling drugs, and all that goes along with it. Cathal Crumley congratulated PSNI on work completed.

**Drug Testing Element** – Cathal Crumley queried if it was a device or a breathalyser and stated it was a really important tool which had been introduced since September, and its use should be expanded. Accidents on roads increase all the time; it is unbelievable that one can be in charge of a vehicle in these circumstances. The testing has been welcomed.

Cllr Antaine Ó'Fearghail thanked PSNI for the report and welcomed Supt Claire Hamilton on behalf of Sinn Féin. Cllr Ó'Fearghail stated drugs were a scourge everywhere and it was an All-Ireland problem; those arrested are not bringing in the drugs. Now he realised it is two different devices for both alcohol and drugs testing; there are more people driving with drugs than alcohol.

**Funding of Drug Testing** – Linda Watson referred to the previous meeting where members were told it was a pilot, dependant on funding. She queried what level could it be continued at.

**House Raid** – Linda Watson queried if a house was raided do the PSNI keep those people on their radar or do the public have to report again.

**Outcome 1 - Response** –

PSNI are targeting high level dealers and taking a multi-layered approach to tackling it. It was confirmed that work was being carried out at a high level and Chief Supt Gillian Kearney referred to the report from OCB that DS Avine Kelly previously delivered to PCSP which showed £5.6M worth of drugs were seized, along with firearms, ammunition, and assets frozen. Whilst issues may be more visible at lower level PCSP members were assured attention was given at higher levels. She explained these people are sophisticated, know what they are doing, and exploit others so that they are not caught. PSNI are fortunate to have the support of OCB. INLA are significantly involved in the supply of drugs in the area and PSNI highlight that fact in social media posts. There are drug cases in court every week. She added that

she could not give the local DST team enough credit for investigations they have run in relation to drugs supply.

Chief Supt Kearney also explained this is the first area where people have been convicted in relation to telephone data. No drugs were seized but the telephone data was enough to secure a conviction. PSNI are tackling the issue at different levels and tackling different people. After criminal justice element has been satisfied PSNI signpost individuals to get help. PSNI must be seen to deal with that criminality. Any piece of information members of the public have could be what is required.

As a legislative authority PSNI need to search houses but they may not have enough information to do that; members of the public need to inform PSNI.

**Launch of Operation Safehold** – this is targeted activity in the district. PSNI know the challenges, the layers of criminality and exploitation in and around these areas. Support is required from local communities to stand up and promote what is being carried out by PSNI. The message needs to be amplified to reassure people.

**Drug Testing Kits** – Funding is an issue, but officers are trained and work will continue. The past number of months has shown PSNI need the kits, therefore, more work is being carried out to secure the funding. Forensic examination of drug wipes will need some work. She explained a roadside test is carried out, if initial indication shows the presence of drugs, then that is forwarded to forensics for further testing.

**Road Traffic Collisions** – it was reported there were zero fatal RTCs which has been welcomed.

**Drugs** - People have normalised taking drugs, although they can still get into a car and kill someone. We are not legislators; PSNI just enforce the law. They are seeing Lithuanian criminals coming in and being arrested, foreign nationals coming in to grow drugs and then leave, along with our own organised crime gangs.

**Outcome 2 – Further Discussion -**

**Organised Fights** – Ald Niree McMorris mentioned organised fights taking place with youths in the Waterside area; with a recent incident that was recorded at Irish Street and Top of the Hill.

A house was attacked and windows smashed, where the family have a child getting palliative care. There is a paramilitary-type element to this; these youths are a menace to communities; they think ‘we are the boys’ and terrorising their own communities. It was queried if any headway had been made in this area, were youths identified in order to knock at their doors as some families know they are involved. The youths are getting younger and younger which makes it harder to talk to them.

**CCTV in City Centre** – there is an issue of PSNI not putting funding into CCTV within the City which is an integral part of ensuring the safety of citizens. There are approximately 90 odd cases of vulnerable people in/around bridges monthly. All partners must be involved. Council is picking up the bill, which affects ratepayers. CCTV is a good tool, in the past there have been incidents when someone has jumped off the bridge, CCTV was used to trace their movements and help identify them. It is a massive tool for tackling crime. It was queried if PSNI could do anything else to help with the funding issue?

**Outcome 2 – Response on Further Discussion -**

**Organised Fights** – Chief Supt Kearney stated that the fights were taking place in an interface area. This has been tasked to Supt Claire Hamilton re youth engagement, although it has been challenging with funding cuts. It is very difficult to control. If offences are committed PSNI deal with that first and ensure the outcome is appropriate to child. Support is brought in on the back of that. Social media makes it challenging as it can be over so quickly. People are urged to keep informing the NPT who is involved, even to prioritise what schools to go to, as it would help to align where resources should be sent. This conversation must be continued.

CCTV – the decision on CCTV is above Chief Supt Kearney's head. There is not a consistent approach to this; it is a five-year piece of work. Funding has been secured in the past and funds will be secured if possible. Chief Supt Kearney agreed with the value of the CCTV cameras.

**OUTCOME 3 – PSNI has a Representative, Valued and Enabled Workforce**

**Themes** – Stop and Search Statistics, Frequency of Use of Powers, Number of Allegations received.

**Outcome 3 - Questions/Issues Raised -**

**Recruitment** – Cllr Martin Reilly referred to recruitment billboards around the City and said the recruitment campaign would be very important. He said it was worth noting the significant drop in complaints in the Council area were down 20%, where they had risen in other areas.

**NPTs & Building Confidence** – Ald Niree McMorris said it would be nice if NPTs could come into community centres and local areas. An event is coming up in Irish Street and the Wardens are attending; it would be good to have NPTs there in order to get to know officers and who to contact.

**Organised Fighting** – in relation to organised fighting, Ald McMorris stated she would like to see police going into one prominent school, ie, Lisneal College and a piece of work completed around this school. The key is to send the message to groups.

Ald McMorris informed members that she rang the Duty Inspector quite often and every single one of them are obliging and respectful. They have always been respondent when contacted, when they say they will send crews, they do. There was an incident on 26/01/26 and when Ald McMorris contacted PSNI they were there within minutes. It would be appreciated if NPTs started to build confidence within the community. PSNI were commended for doing a sterling job under difficult circumstances.

**Recruitment Drive** - Cathal Crumley referred to the recruitment drive stating there was a massive under-representation within the Catholic/Nationalist community. He said it was a very difficult and complex environment; it was a huge job where a lot of things needed to be addressed. The role of the NPTs is very important in how they meet the needs of local communities; a lot of communities need that level of engagement. A huge amount of work is required in the long-term; it is going in the right direction but the key to that is to gain the trust and respect of local communities. PSNI were wished luck in that regard.

The Chair thanked PSNI for the report and stated a photo shoot would take place in relation to the Recruitment drive, along with interested PCSP members. In relation to rural areas, recruitment is very important; there are no rural Wardens. Lauren (Sgt for Derg area) is very active but is off at the moment. The current Seargent will be 100% but NPTs are very important in the rural areas. There is a good team there.

**Rural Crime** - The Chair referred to the report where nothing was recorded re rural

crime, burglaries in rural areas, ASB re dogs and how this is dealt with. Would like to see more detail in this regard. Trailer/Quad marking was very successful, but he felt it was important to keep people on their side in those areas and said they would do whatever they could to support PSNI.

**Outcome 3 – Response -**

Chief supt Gillian Kearney said it was previously reported the challenges that PSNI would face; this point in time is the most challenging. NPTs are a quarter of what they were four years ago; it is a small number for such a big area. There are big challenges and risks. Officers also have to fill in for Custody Detention Officers – 50% one day was covered by NPT; this was after an incident in Currynerin.

There is currently a recruitment drive into NPTs; 51 are going into Garnerville every five weeks. Once training has been completed NPTs can expand; it will probably take six months to see that. NPTs are a priority; we know the value of them. Demand is complex where this is balanced against high risk; PSNI are very aware of vulnerability and risk. Inspectors have been very supportive to Teams.

**Burglaries** – Chief supt Kearney said there was a massive drop overall in burglaries which explained why it was not in the report, but she appreciated the rural needs. She explained there has been a slight change in the Chief Inspectors' responsibilities in a bid to give more support with more visibility in leadership. CI Graeme Craig is Waterside/Strabane area and CI Cherith Craig is Cityside.

**Outcome 3 – Thanks to Response -**

**Recruitment** - Cathal Crumley appreciated the extra explanation on recruitment and said everything was governed by resources. NPTs and that model of policing in rural communities is a key model and a great way to build on it. He said he was aware of the lack of personnel, cutbacks, funding, etc, which could have an impact. Whilst PSNI have NPTs who work effectively, the problems still exist when there are not enough resources, so there is a huge demand on the Teams. Community support and solutions are required as well, the more engagement the better. There are huge problems on the ground.

**PCPM 06/26** **PCSP Draft Action Plan 2026/2027**

The PCSP Manager referred to the Draft Action Plan which had been emailed to all members. There was nothing to highlight with regards to funding; PCSP were asked to work within the same budget. Members were asked if they had proposed changes. One change had been to include child criminal exploitation which has now been added to the Draft Action Plan.

**Draft Action Plan**

**Proposed:** Cllr Reilly
**Seconded:** Linda Watson

In terms of **Consensual Grant Aid**, in line with Good Relations and Community Development, members were asked if they were content with allowing 10% to be used by the lead partner for administration fee. There is no additional funding available to cover this, so if a DEA was awarded £20,000, £2,000 could be claimed for administration fees. Agreement on this was requested by all members.

Alison Wallace stated she had a conflict of interest as she managed consensual grant aid for Waterside DEA.

Ald McMorris agreed on 10% to be used for administration fee. Cllr Reilly stated it made sense that the lead partner has staff to do the work.

**Consensual Grant Aid - Administration Fee of 10%**

**Proposed:** Ald McMorris
**Seconded:** Cllr Reilly

**PCPM 07/26** **Any Other Business**

**Potential Underspend 2025/26**

**Kaboosh** – the PCSP Manager advised that there were several delays in the delivery of this project and that written confirmation was submitted on 26/01/26 from Kaboosh stating that they could not deliver the project in the current financial year and were therefore withdrawing from the small grants process, resulting in an underspend of £9,930. At this stage it is too late to offer this funding to another group/project as it has to be delivered by 31/03/26.

PCSP have some ideas to come up with a plan, and it has been discussed with some of the Neighbourhood colleagues in Derg and Strabane. A workshop on wheels was discussed which would take 2 groups away for a day and do work on the bus which might be a way to get people to open up. It is the very early stages of the discussion and there would be more than one day trip. At the moment there is no idea of cost and all of it would not be spent. Domestic violence cameras would be purchased with money left over.

Cathal Crumley asked could this be done by DEA?

The PCSP Manager stated this would not be possible as consensual grant recipients have been asked to deliver their projects by 28/02/26 so it is too tight of a deadline to complete. If there had been more time to consider possibilities, it could have been broken up across the DEAs. PCSP has been chasing Kaboosh from before Christmas.

Alison Wallace stated it sounded good; she would support the idea if there was more than one day trip with additional money being spent on domestic violence cameras.

Ald McMorris queried if someone on the trip divulged about a domestic violence incident would there be people there to signpost them for help. Is a wraparound service being offered on the bus? Sometimes when these disclosures are made, services are required.

The PCSP Manager stated the idea was to provide support leaflets and Neighbourhood Officers would participate in the workshops as well.

Chief Supt Kearney stated it would be great to see this initiative in Strabane/Castlederg area as there is a lack of general understanding of new legislation such as coercive control and non-fatal strangulation in some of these areas. This type of initiative would be welcomed in rural areas.

Cllr Reilly stated he was happy with it, particularly with Chief Supt Kearney's comments re rural issues. He said personal alarms were an item that money could be spent on as there is always a demand for them. If there is an underspend, then there is an opportunity there.

The PCSP Manager stated PCSP were waiting on an update re ARC funding; funding was applied for in order to buy cameras, personal alarms, and engraving machine.

**Proposed:** Ald McMorris
**Seconded:** Cllr Reilly

**Policing in Partnership Awards 2026**

The PCSP Manager stated Consensual Grant Aid had been used as a basis for the awards application due to positive feedback which had been received. PCSP are honoured to be chosen as finalists. There is one place available for a PCSP Member

to attend. The PCSP Manager will issue an email to all members. Please reply to the PCSP Manager if interested in attending.

**PCSP Manager**

**Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (BEM)**

The Chair congratulated Ald McMorris on being included as a Medallist of the Order of the British Empire (BEM) in the Kings' New Year's Honours List for services to the community.

**Road Safety Table Quiz**

The Chair commended the road safety table quiz led by Davy Jackston. Congratulations was extended to winners and runners up.

**Welcome**

The Chair welcomed Supt Claire Hamilton to the Team.

**PCPM 08/26** **Date of Next Meeting**

The next **PCSP Meeting** has been arranged for Tuesday 24 February 2026 in the Council Chamber, Guildhall at 10am.

**The meeting ended at approximately 12.00 noon**

# ACTIONS

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| **PCPM 05/26** | Social Media – PSNI requested to raise awareness of Social Media (X & AI) to young people on images being altered. | **PSNI** |
| **PCPM 06/25** | Chair asked if there were plans to roll out the extensive EVAWG Programme to the rural schools in Strabane.<br><br>Chief Supt Kearney agreed that the programme should be rolled out across rural schools. Supt Claire Hamilton to look at this. | **PSNI** |
| **PCPM 07/26** | The PCSP Manager will issue an email to all members in relation to the Policing in Partnership Awards, and members should reply if interested in attending. | **PCSP** |