

Minutes of Policing and Community Safety Partnership Meeting Policing Committee

**Derry City and Strabane District Council
Tuesday 21 October 2025
Council Chamber, Strabane at 10.00am**

Present: Marie Brown, Cathal Crumley, Ald Darren Guy, Cllr Christopher Jackson, David Jackson, Cllr Emma McGinley, Karen McLaughlin, Ald Niree McMorris, Cllr Antaine O'Fearghail, Cllr Martin Reilly, and Linda Watson.

PSNI: CI Graeme Craig, Insp Simon Gurney, Chief Superintendent Gillian Kearney, Temp CI Cathal Pearce, Insp Katie Slater, and Const Gemma Stone.

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

PCPM 28/25 Apologies

Cllr John Boyle, Cllr Sandra Duffy, Ald Keith Kerrigan, Cllr Fergal Leonard, Patrick McGonagle, Alison Wallace.

PCPM 29/25 Chairperson's Business

Unfortunately, the Chair and Vice-Chair were not present at the meeting. Cllr Martin Reilly was therefore nominated to chair the meeting.

Cllr Reilly invited all members to the October PCSP PC Meeting.

There was no further Chair's business to note.

PCPM 30/25 Approval of Minutes of PCSP Meeting on 30/09/25

The minutes of the previous PCSP Meeting (DSPCSP 41/25-48/25) were approved as follows:

Proposed by: Cllr Christopher Jackson

Seconded by: Ald Niree McMorris

PCPM 31/25 Matters Arising

The following matters were raised:

CCTV – Cllr Jackson referred to CCTV where details and figures were given on attempted suicide and suicidal welfare concerns. He said that since the last meeting there had been a high-profile suicide where someone entered the water, and the body was found on Sunday. Cllr Jackson stated he would like to thank all who were concerned in the recovery of deceased remains.

The Acting Chair also thanked those within the community for their support in the search.

Rotation of Meetings – the PCSP Manager referred to current works being carried out in the Guildhall therefore the PCSP PC Meeting for October was held in Strabane. The meetings going forward have been amended with the PCSP Meetings located in Council Chamber, Guildhall, Derry, and the PCSP PC Meetings located in Council Chamber, Strabane. She reminded members to be aware of the change of location in their diaries.

PCPM 32/25

Presentation of Police Performance Report 1 April – 30 September 2025

Chief Superintendent Gillian Kearney informed members of recent changes to leadership and welcomed the following to the PSNI senior leadership team:

- Temp CI Cathal Pearce - Operations, Custody, POET & district support team
- Temp CI Graeme Craig - Waterside & Strabane area of district
- Temp CI Cherith Craig - Cityside Area
- Insp Katie Slater - responsible for custody in Waterside (one of 2 Inspectors)
- Temp Insp Simon Gurney - DST
- Supt Sinead McIlDowney who is taking the place of Peter Brannigan (who left last month)

Chief Superintendent Kearney stated she was waiting on confirmation for the replacement for Supt William Calderwood; his last meeting was in September. She hoped a replacement would be in place by November. Appreciation was shared for the work he had completed within the district.

The Acting Chair asked for all changes to the PSNI Senior Leadership Team to be circulated to PCSP Members.

PSNI

Chief Superintendent Gillian Kearney referred members to the report and gave an overview on the following items:

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:

EVAWG Primary/Secondary Schools - Linda Watson requested more information on what kind of EVAWG work is being done in schools and whether it was taking place in primary or secondary schools.

Outcome 1 - Response – the NH Team are focusing on attitudes and behaviours, how to identify attitudes that are negative, and in particular how boys interact and engage with girls and young women.

Chief Superintendent Gillian Kearney explained this type of work was more suited to secondary schools. She explained the challenge is with the lack of resourcing of NH Officers, and the aim is to visit as many schools as possible.

Justice Centre - Marie Brown referred to the Justice Centre and the impact on survivors; more statements need to be completed in the Justice Centre rather than the Police Station. They are linking up with young people who are suffering intimidation

and threats from drug dealers and are looking at initiatives which can help those who are most vulnerable and at risk. Marie Brown said this approach seems to be working well although she stated it would be good to look at what other initiatives are available.

John Street, Drugs & Alcohol Issues - Marie Brown mentioned John Street, where Police regularly deal with drugs and alcohol issues, and young people getting attacked. She mentioned three separate occasions when she had been on the street, and something had been happening outside the bar and Police had intercepted; this was noted. Police were commended for dealing with these types of incidents.

Collaborative Approach - Cllr Jackson welcomed the ongoing work. He stated he was encouraged by the collaborative approach with community partners and said the figures presented show we are going in the right direction. The collaborative work with schools in education was also welcomed.

EVAWG & Case Studies - EVAWG and Domestic Abuse remains a dedicated priority for the Senior Leadership Team of PSNI. The case studies show the importance of this, along with highlighting some of the behaviour that continues within the City and District. He said any action taken by PSNI to hold these people to account is welcomed.

Cllr Jackson requested that more detail be given within future reporting of case studies to provide more information about learning or actions coming from these cases and how this can help to tackle EVAWG.

He highlighted the challenges of resourcing within PSNI and said the positive action on EVAWG was welcomed, particularly during these challenging times.

Cllr McMorris agreed with Cllr Jackson on more detail being given within the case studies. Cllr McMorris requested information on repeat perpetrators - if perpetrator was connected to victim, or to confirm if it was a random person. If random perpetrators are attacking women, security measures need to be put in place. More information was requested on how women have come out of this with adequate action being taken.

PSNI

Outcome 1 - Response

Chief Superintendent Kearney confirmed that all feedback would be taken on board and PSNI would endeavour to provide more detail on learning or actions resulting from those cases. She explained information is sought from Victim Satisfaction Surveys but not for incidences of domestic abuse, as police do not want to re-traumatise a victim. She said this is something the PSNI is currently working on. Chief Superintendent Kearney said there are indicators of people wanting to stay within the criminal justice system so they will provide a statement and go to court. Police aim to improve this experience, so people feel supported as they go through the process. There is also work ongoing with repeat offenders and what programmes are being delivered to support them.

Presentation re EVAWG - Linda Watson referred to the previous meeting where Supt W Calderwood informed members of PCSP that a presentation on EVAWG, to show what work is being carried out in that area, could be arranged. She queried when this would happen.

ASSIST within Justice Centre – Marie Brown felt that women would be happy to complete satisfaction surveys. She stated they work with males also and offered help if required. ASSIST do work within the Justice Centre and support males, females, and children. Ms Brown suggested that ASSIST could provide a presentation to PCSP Members so they could hear about their role and interim work.

A support mechanism is being designed to help keep young people in the system – she said they are often the hidden victim. She explained this is a resource for the PSNI and they would like to hear more from Police and work in partnership on this matter. She

also stated there was a lack of access to a remote court and they are pushing for that within the Justice Centre.

Marie Brown said decision-making was an issue and referred to the downgrading of strangulation which is a big issue, and said there is also concern over the sentencing of perpetrators. She stated they were lobbying to ensure better outcomes.

The Acting Chair referred to the items mentioned above to be added to the next PCSP Meeting, ie, Presentation on EVAWG and from ASSIST to PCSP Members.

PCSP Manager

Cllr Emma McGinley informed members, for transparency, that she is a member on the Board for Foyle Women's Network. (Conflict of Interest).

Halloween – Chief Superintendent Kearney informed members that PSNI secured training on Project Vigilant for the night-time economy where Police wear plain clothes. She confirmed they had the capacity to promote this at Halloween within the City.

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

Themes – Drug Offences; Drugs, Seizures, and Arrests.

Responses included – Revised Drugs Strategy; Proactive Operations targeting Drug Supply; Suspects considered for Safeguarding and Support Referrals; Regular meetings with Organised Crime Branch; Stop & Search to comply with Procedures and Legislation; Juveniles; Drugs Intercepted in Postal System; Roadside Drug Impairment Testing; Education; Training; Officers trained in specialist surveillance Training; and Local Drugs Testing.

Outcome 2 - Questions/Issues Raised:

Addiction to Drugs - Marie Brown informed members that they were picking up a lot of young women addicted to drugs. Unfortunately, they are getting loans and then supplying drugs to pay off the loan. They are at a high risk when they are in homeless places that are not supporting them; it is hard to stay away from drugs when in places like that. Some of these young people are not criminals but are vulnerable.

They system is putting young people in there who are vulnerable and they end up going in the wrong direction. They are then asked to sell drugs by those supplying, so the supplier is not getting in trouble. The homeless are disadvantaged, the system needs to be more creative in how they are dealt with.

Rock Mills and the Homeless Centre are being targeted by dealers; this needs to be addressed with intervention and prevention. Ms Brown said drugs were rife in the city and she has never seen it like this before. She said this needs to be addressed through intervention. She said the young people are becoming criminals and this needs to be tackled. She also highlighted that many of them are at risk of sexual exploitation and this sets them on a downward spiral.

Cross Departmental Work – Cllr Emma McGinley said she welcomed that the focus was working on people's vulnerability and that there was cross-departmental working to try and support them. She referred to Cllr Duffy who works in the homeless sector and stressed how important it was to help steer young people onto a better path. Criminalising addicts is not going to solve it; there needs to be wrap-around support to get them onto a better path; the focus should be on the vulnerable.

Exploitation of Young People – Cllr Christopher Jackson thanked Chief Superintendent Kearney for the detailed report. He referenced a common thread in the report of exploitation across the City and District. He said young people, vulnerable individuals, and those who have come here to start a new life are being targeted in particular. He said drug gangs were masquerading as paramilitaries and are exploiting

young people. He said a significant seizure of Cannabis had been made recently, but the people who had been arrested were those that were exploited. Cllr Jackson said there are people causing serious harm in the City and district and trying to manipulate and influence young people within communities. This is being seen across the board. There are also interface issues which is stirring up sectarian problems across the City. Regarding seizures, those responsible are not being charged.

Rise in Sectarism – Cllr Jackson referred to a rise in sectarianism and specifically focused on an incident in the Waterside which took place at the beginning of the month. Twelve masked men, with weapons, attacked premises in Spencer Road. Police were called but only two arrived after 10/15mins; they could not intervene due to their own safety. Cllr Jackson said he would have hoped that at 10:30pm on a Saturday night there would be adequate resources for interface patrolling.

He said the gang were intent on causing harm and two people were hospitalised. Civilians had intervened and this had potentially saved two young males from receiving life-changing injuries.

These people need to be held to account, and the rising issue of sectarianism needs to be addressed. Cllr Jackson said there has been a rise in incidents involving the wearing of red/white/blue balaclavas or displaying national flags. These people are being sent out to rile up the public. Cllr Jackson stated he would have expected a quicker and adequate response and requested PSNI to shed light on the issue.

Roadside Drug Testing – Linda Watson referred to PDT (Preliminary Drug Testing) where 21 out of 31 were positive when tested and had drugs on them. She asked when this type of testing would be rolled out service-wide.

Outcome 2 – Response

Chief Superintendent Kearney said the use of PDTs was based on financial resources.

In relation to the 4th October incident Chief Superintendent Kearney said she didn't have an answer but would bring it back to members by email or at the next meeting. The Chair requested an update on this be issued to members prior to next meeting (by email).

PSNI

Chief Superintendent Kearney said PSNI is resolute to tackling organised crime, eg, INLA, and stated Officers work closely with the Organised Crime Branch. It was agreed a presentation would be given to PCSP members relating to this matter.

PSNI

PSNI have dealt with six million pounds worth of drugs, bank freezing orders, firearms, etc, to tackle groups. Messaging is very clear on social media what and who they are targeting. Chief Superintendent Kearney stated that continued advocacy and support from PCSP is required to show that PSNI are tackling these issues.

Chief Superintendent Kearney referred to sectarian tensions within the report and stated that if they had advance notice of tensions there was prioritisation resources are put there.

It was made clear that Police do not want to criminalise children. PSNI work with all agencies across the district and have been effective at reducing tensions.

Chief Superintendent Kearney referred to the disorder in June and said 11 people were arrested and 10 of them are going through the criminal justice system.

Chief Superintendent Kearney said PSNI were trying to prioritise all these issues to keep ahead of those intent on causing disorder to prevent the narrative that there are

vigilantes patrolling in the City.

Drugs Issues – The Chair mentioned the case study re drugs seizure in Strabane where those arrested were foreign nationals. He asked for an update on cross-border operations.

He also spoke about work PSNI were doing around the issues of fireworks and ASB with children in local schools and asked if there were any more visits planned before Halloween.

Outcome 2 – Response

Chief Superintendent Kearney confirmed that the Organised Crime Branch worked with An Garda Síochána on a daily basis with regards to the movement of drugs across the border. Ongoing investigations will continue to target and identify who is controlling this. Local intelligence will be actioned as quickly as possible so that work continues.

She said the arrests in the Strabane case were one part of the investigation – PSNI's target is to find who is controlling the operation.

She explained Officers had made a number of seizures of fireworks, including a substantial haul in the Waterside which had given respite for a short period of time. With schools closing for Halloween there was limited time to visit many more schools but the message would continue to be pushed out on social media.

Fireworks - Cathal Crumley referred to fireworks and welcomed this being mentioned within the report in the lead up to Halloween. He said fireworks are a huge issue which starts as early as August. Some people, including vulnerable individuals, the elderly, and people with pets feel under attack with fireworks. He mentioned that fireworks are being used almost as a weapon and explained that young people had targeted a specific house with fireworks in one incident.

Cathal Crumley congratulated those involved re seizures in Waterside, Ballyarnett, and Culmore Road. He said the Culmore operation had been very successful and had removed fireworks to the value of £6,000 from the streets.

Cathal Crumley said it was understood that the fireworks came from Donegal and he was not sure that the right co-operation was there. Whilst fireworks were seized they were replenished again. There could be more cross-border work. There is a sense that there is a container with thousands of fireworks in them; there is a whole network for this extensive and lucrative business. Aside from the dangers there is a huge level of crime going on and he welcomed the PSNI work to date to tackle this.

The Chair agreed in relation to the timeline of fireworks starting to appear and said it dated to early September.

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:

There was no questions/issues raised.

PCPM 33/25

Recruitment

Chief Superintendent Kearney informed members that a PSNI recruitment campaign was to take place in early 2026. Ahead of this she confirmed the Chief Constable will visit schools in Derry City and Strabane in December.

The Acting Chair referred to the policing budget and said it could be difficult to recruit people due to the issue of salary as employees get more in other sectors. He said it

was similar to health workers securing pay parity.

The Chair stated that pay was an inhibiting factor and suggested that PCSP write to the Justice Minister re supporting the cause for adequate funding for pay increases and to request additional pay/compensation for those in existing employment on the frontline.

Proposed: Cllr Martin Reilly
Seconded: Ald Niree McMorris

PCSP

PCPM 34/25 Any Other Business

There was no business to report.

PCPM 35/25 Date of Next Meeting

The next **PCSP Meeting** has been arranged for Tuesday 25 November 2025 in the Council Chamber, Guildhall at 10am.

The meeting ended at approximately 11.30am.

ACTIONS

PCPM 32/25, Page 2	All changes to PSNI senior leadership team to be circulated to PCSP Members.	PSNI
PCPM 32/35, Page 3	It was agreed to include more detail in case studies to provide more information about learning or actions coming from these cases and how this can help to tackle EVAWG.	PSNI
PCPM 32/25, Page 4	Request presentations for the November PCSP meeting from PSNI's EVAWG team and from ASSIST (based on availability).	PCSP Manager
PCPM 32/25, Page 5	PSNI to update members on the response to incident at Spencer Road on 4 th October.	PSNI
PCPM 32/25, Page 5	PSNI to provide an update to PCSP members on organised crime and how officers work closely with the organised Crime Branch.	PSNI
PCPM 33/25 Page 7	To write to the Justice Minister supporting the cause for adequate funding for pay increases for PSNI officers and to request additional pay/compensation for those in existing employment on the frontline.	PCSP