

Minutes of Policing and Community Safety Partnership Special Meeting

**Tuesday 30th July 2024
Council Chamber Guildhall**

- Present:** Cllr John Boyle, Michaela Boyle, Marie Brown, Cathal Crumley, Cllr Sandra Duffy, Karl Duncan, Ald Darren Guy, Cllr Christopher Jackson, Davy Jackson, Ald Keith Kerrigan, Cllr Emma McGinley, Patsy McGonagle, Karen McLaughlin, Ald Niree McMorris, Tiya Moore, Alison Wallace and Linda Watson.
- PSNI:** T/Chief Superintendent Gillian Kearney, CI Yvonne McManus, T/Chief Superintendent Gillian Kearney, CI William Calderwood and Cons. John Wootton.
- In Attendance at Meeting:** Vanessa Russell (PCSP Manager) and Alexandra Wallace (Admin).
- DSPCSP 57/24 Introduction and Welcome**
- Cllr John Boyle, welcomed all PCSP members to the meeting and stated that he was standing in for the Chair. He wished to offer his congratulations to Linda Watson on her appointment as PCSP Vice-Chair.
- DSPCSP 58/24 Apologies:** Fergal Leonard, Cllr Anatine O'Fearghail and Cllr Martin Reilly.
- DSPCSP 59/24 Approval of Minutes – Minutes of PCSP Meeting 25/06/24 (DSPCSP 48/24-56/24)**
- The Minutes of PCSP Meeting were checked for accuracy. The minutes were proposed as follows:
- Proposed by: Ald Niree McMorris**
- Seconded by: Cllr Emma McGinley**
- DSPCSP 60/24 Matters Arising**
- PCSP Members were informed that the issue of fencing at Lisnagelvin Primary School (DSPCSP 55/24) was raised with PSNI who advised that the school had asked PSNI's Crime Prevention Officer to review their premises and provide crime prevention advice. PSNI stated that this is standard practice and this has been done for many premises in the past, however this service is offered as advice/recommendations only. PSNI have advised that the request to review premises and provide crime prevention advice was not generated due to the new holding centre.
- The PCSP Manager referred to page 14 of the PSNI report which states "The Police Service does not accept liability for the advice given. The total elimination of crime cannot be guaranteed but the advice if acted upon and implemented, will reduce the fear of crime and the opportunity of crime being committed."
- It was agreed that the PCSP manager would forward the PSNI report to members for their information.

PCSP Manager

Small Project Support Grants.

PCSP Members requested a synopsis of the 5 projects which received funding for 2024/2025. It was agreed that the PCSP Manager would circulate this to members.

PCSP Manager

Conflict of Interest Declaration (DSPCSP 52/24)

The PCSP Manager reminded PCSP members that there are still some outstanding Conflict of Interest Declaration forms that need to be returned.

PCSP Members

Justice and Security Stop & Search Powers

The PCSP Manager informed members that the monthly accountability meetings with PSNI to scrutinise their use of Justice and Security Stop & Search Powers will be scheduled from September. Dates will be circulated to members.

PCSP Manager

DSPCSP 61/24**Presentation of Police Performance Report for the Period May 2024 to 30th July 2024**

T/Chief Supt. Gillian Kearney referred PCSP members to the Report Card which was circulated prior to the meeting and highlighted their analysis relating to Violence Against Women & Girls.

A PCSP member referred to the recent story of Katie Simpson's murder which was reported in the media and called for a review to ask the homicide guide should be applied even though her case happened after the legislation change came into effect.

Response: CI McManus stated that a full PONI investigation in response to this but stated that the results of this haven't been published publicly but PSNI can discuss this at a later meeting. PSNI continue to work collaboratively with a range of agencies to address this. She added that PSNI appreciate the support from the PCSP providing CCTV cameras to high-risk victims of domestic abuse.

Questions to District Commander

A PCSP Member referred to drug seizures and asked if the drug strategy for PSNI can be shared with PCSP Members. He also asked re substance awareness referrals to Youth Justice, i.e. how many are made and if they were successful or not and for further information re Neighbourhood Policing educational talks to schools.

T/Chief Supt. Kearney advised that the drugs strategy hasn't been shared but committed to look at sharing this with PCSP members.

T/Chief Supt. Kearney

CI McManus advised that if a young person comes to Police attention re drugs, their Youth Diversionary Officer prepares a file in conjunction with the Youth Justice Agency to discuss what is best for the child, as there are often alternatives to putting young people through the Criminal Justice system.

In relation to educational work, PSNI use virtual reality goggles and deliver lessons on drugs, harm caused and vaping. PSNI continue to work with schools who want to engage with them.

CI Calderwood advised that Derry and Strabane has a really strong Support Hub that focuses on figures and criminal justice outcomes. He added that the Support Hub is very trauma informed, which is led by PSNI's vulnerability team who look to get support for people through referrals, working closely with the Vulnerability Navigator and Youth Justice Officer to identify risk and refer onto the Support Hub if required.

PCSP members agreed that the figures relating to Violence Against Women & Girls were shocking and stated it would be good to have comparisons at the end of the year.

- Is anyone better off from the figures presented?
- Is there a baseline re confidence in women coming forward?
- What is their experience?
- What are the PSNI doing to build confidence following the Katie Simpson case as women are nervous following this and have lost confidence in reporting crime.

We are aware that this is not just a policing problem, but for all of society, the score card needs more evidence included, in relation engaging and supporting communities.

- In relation to disrupting paramilitary activities, how many ongoing investigations are there within the district?
- Is the PSNI seeing a high levels of money lending as within the Waterside area of the city there seems to be indicator of this?

Response: T/Chief Supt. Kearney stated that PSNI are working hard to increase people's confidence in the criminal justice system, but we appreciate that it is hard to come forward to discuss private matters. The PSNI are aware that program on Katie Simpson case has knocked peoples' confidence in the police and this has been declared a critical incident. She advised that PSNI have appointed a Gold Commander, ACC David Beck who will lead on this and look at how to build confidence especially for the victims and families coming forward to the police. As more detail become available, I will be able to relay this. PSNI deal daily with issues of Domestic Violence. We review these incidents every morning at 9.15am and discuss any additional actions required to safeguard people.

In relation to the number of incidents, I would like to see an increase in the reporting of these crimes as this is massively under reported and this is an indicator of confidence. This the same across NI with some of the response relating to how crime is recorded, there are other types of offences we see being used especially in Domestic Violence legislation. Nationally we are still seeing higher of incidents of Violence against Women and Girls being reported.

T/Chief Supt. Kearney stated that they will look at the report card to see how the PSNI can measure confidence. Over the next 5 weeks every Sgt and Inspector will be attend the Justice Centre to see what the centre has to offer, to highlight support mechanisms that are available for male & female victims. We can use the centre to take statements of evidence from victims, the PSNI have been given access to the facility so we can provide a one-stop support for victims of Domestic Violence.

The PCSP members agreed that the Chair write a letter to the Minister for Justice requesting a homicide review of the Katie Simpson case should be undertaking especially as this now falls outside the current legislation.

PCSP Manager

In relation to paramilitary activity, our colleagues in organized crime are working with different groups across NI. Money lending is something that's massively under reported to the police and we know that is happening and it's a really debilitating to be caught in that cycle. Should members become aware of money lending going on within their communities, please contact the PSNI and report it so that we can respond. There is key engagement carried out in other areas, which we are keen to adopt here in the district. We need to reduce paramilitary control of the communities and reassure the public that there are other avenues for support.

CI Yvonne McManus advised that PSNI measure if anyone is better off after they report a crime through our victim satisfaction survey which asks questions re our response and the outcome of each crime. Communication between crime victims is very important, but we are happy to look at how we can improve this going forward.

We do a lot of activity/engagement with groups, but often they don't want it advertised as a Domestic Violence event as this can be a deterrent to people turning up. Instead we refer to it as a crime prevention event and then bring up the subject of Domestic Violence. We're very keen to do more with PCSP and local community groups especially regarding Violence Against Women and Girls.

An independent Member stated that they saw the documentary and thoughts go out to Katie Simpson's family. She commended officers for bringing forward the necessary information, which clearly highlighted that there was a weakness from the very beginning. I want to commend work on-going on school's education programme, especially against VAWG, but we need to see more education on coercive control. Young people need to understand relationships and to recognise when they are being controlled/harassed. I'd like to see more programme in schools as a proactive approach. She asked for information on the following:

- Can PSNI give us information in relation to the City Centre time re safety of women in the context of the where you have night-economy compared to urban/rural areas outside the city?
- Can we get information on domestic abuse training for officers. Aware that one has just been completed, is this for all officers of all ranks and is it annually or on-going training? E.g. I had recently attended PSNI station with a victim of harassment and stalking. The officer who dealt with investigation was very diligent and showed real empathy to his work. There were some issues re timelines due to perpetrator being in a different jurisdiction. The unfortunate thing was the work pattern of officer meant that this lady had to go to the police station at 10pm as no other time could be accommodated due to the officer's work pattern and was not on day shift for another 4-5 weeks. The victim had to leave 2 young children to go to PSNI station at 10pm.

Response: T/Chief Supt. Kearney stated that perhaps someone else on shift during the day could have been briefed so that they could take the information from the lady at a more suitable time and I would have hoped that officers would

link in with other teams to facilitate this.

Agree with the PCSP member's statement concerning focusing on education programs on coercive control. Training cycle is done annually, PSNI are mandated to do this to make sure that officers are aware of obligations, what are the powers, we also receive feedback from victims of Domestic Violence and who have been through Justice system and the challenges of this. I've asked that all inspectors attend that training so that they could hear from a victim what it was like to go through that system. Those inspectors are on 24/7 reviewing and supervising calls that come into teams, so to have that exposure is very important. I know that inspectors here really benefited from that. We are being held accountable to all of those training cycles, so if someone doesn't complete them, there's a warning sent out.

CI McManus stated that the landscape for Urban/Rural/City Centre is different. We have night-life which is delivered with Community Safety Wardens, we also link in with welfare officers at University of Ulster and the taxi operators. We recently seized 7 taxis for illegal taxis during the Marine festival and we appreciate that city-centre is our focus due to it having the largest number of people.

More engagement within the community we had an event for International Women's Day in Castlederg where we talked about different offences and the right to ask. Appreciate that it looks different and always content to go into the community to deliver talks like this.

An Independent member mentioned that a few years ago the PCSP hosted a themed event on domestic violence. This could be an opportunity for PCSP, PSNI and FWA to get together and consider a large, themed event next year.

Elected member informed members that the conversation around Violence Against Women and Girls today has been very informative about what police are doing and what's going on in communities.

In relation to drugs offences, she commended police for work in this area, especially in relation to the Support Hub. Concerns were raised around the different types of drugs that are coming through, especially pregabalin and benzos, particularly since they're being peddled to people who are very vulnerable. We see issues re fake drugs that are being delivered via the postal service that are higher than any dosage any person would be prescribed and the affect that this has on people.

In response to a query, T/Chief Supt. Kearney stated that a naloxone pilot ran in Belfast, however it hasn't been agreed to extend it out to other areas. Currently it sits under the Deputy Chief Constable's remit and is being reviewed at present. It was agreed that PSNI would request an update on this and report back to PCSP.

T/Chief Supt. Kearney

An elected member requested clarification stalking/harassment figures (page 1) and asked what percentage of crimes reported to PSNI result in action being taken.

Response: CI Yvonne McManus informed members that PSNI will incorporate this in the next report.

CI McManus

An elected member referred to decisions made by the courts that affect community confidence, including an example where a person was convicted of child sexual offences but is now back living in a housing estate where the offences took place. He also urged PSNI to keep consistency in neighbourhood policing teams where possible as this helps to increase confidence in policing.

An elected member thanked PSNI after petrol bombs were intercepted in Waterside and stated she is hopeful that increased confidence in policing means that people will identify those carrying out these attacks.

T/Chief Supt. Kearney reported the field testing of some drugs while the person is in custody is now being carried out at the station, which leads to a faster criminal justice outcome instead of waiting for the results to come back from the lab.

Elect member agreed with it was a very useful conversations and there's still a lot of work that is needed to be done to instill confidence and to ensure that women and girls are safe in our district. This also goes with drugs and agree that they are readily available across the district. We all see the devastating impact that drugs have on our communities. He questioned if anyone is better off? I'm supporting a constituent who's reporting drug dealing and he's coming back to me to say that even though they're reporting it, nothing's being done, with drugs strategy focusing on supply of drugs and tackle paramilitary gangs who are exploiting our young people.

Elected member informed the meeting of a situation of girl in Waterside saying she doesn't feel safe in her home due to harassment. She's been to the police 5 times but there's been no action taken. I personally installed a camera at her home so that she has evidence but I'm not confident that things are being followed up when they report it. I welcome that weapons are taken off the street and removed from criminal gangs. We need to be careful re language especially when we have concerns that there's a perception in communities that they're being punished because of the actions of a few. e.g. we hear consistently that Creggan is being policed differently from other parts of our district as it's a stronghold for these criminal, armed gangs. The reality is there's very little support but heavy-handed police responses, the style/tone of police response, leads to support for this type of activity. It engages young people to draw them towards this type of activity and it's good to see those concerns reflected in the report by continuing with community impact assessments to take into consideration the views of the communities.

PCSP member informed the meeting that there have been 2 incidents in Strabane over last 2 weeks and stated that communication between PSNI and the local community is very poor. He suggested that communities be invited to attend a debrief so that you can learn the impact of your actions have on people. He also referred to issues where cars are revving late at night in Strabane and asked that this be addressed, as the perception is that people believe that police officers are sitting in the station at night listening to this but not doing anything about it.

CI McManus asked was this the Bypass in Strabane? As we are aware of issues in Canal Basin re excessive noise on-going until 12.45am this morning. PSNI asked people to report these incidences.

The Chair suggested that the member liaise with CI Yvonne McManus in relation to this rather than in this forum.

There have been complaints re nighttime cars, especially the noise late at night on the Dublin Road industrial estate, via college grove and Melmount Manor Nursing home. Police give a commitment that traffic branch would focus on this as it is very concerning for the people who live there.

Response: Ci McManus informed members that this would need to be a joint operation with DVA.

DSPCSP 62/24

Questions on the District Commander's Report

Questions from Members as follows:

1. What is the policy on dealing with death cars in the Strabane district at night/day and how can this be improved?

Response: no further information required

1. What is the drug policy in the Strabane district in detecting suppliers and dealers and how is this shown to the local community?

Response: we've discussed this and think it would be beneficial to have a presentation on drugs strategy to the PCSP by Inspector Cathal Pearce. We want to assure people that all reports re drugs are taken seriously. Before we go to someone's house, we need to make sure that we meet the threshold to respond. We want to reassure people that we have parameters we need to work within.

2. What is the communications strategy in the Strabane area during incidents requiring a lock down?

Response: If we have any major incidents, we have a strategy in place with community reps. We can always improve it and would welcome the opportunity to revisit this.

3. What is the communication strategy with local groups and community reps in the Strabane district?

Response: Same principle as number 3 and how we tell people what we're doing.

4. Shop protests – can't give a specific answer. We have to deal with every issue when it comes our way. We need to take appropriate evidence – this is balanced with human rights around the right to assemble. Article 11 does not allow people to interfere with the rights of others or commit a crime – we will deal with each on its merits and we'll look at it in the context of right to assemble/protest.

DSPCSP 63/24

PCSP Annual Report 2023/2024

The PCSP Annual Report 2023/2024 was approved on the proposal of Linda Watson and seconded by Ald Niree McMorris.

PCSP Manager

DSPCSP 64/24**Any Other Business**

Elect Member raised the follow that since last meeting there was a significant event (12th July parade). I know there was a lot of work that took place in the lead up to this and want to thank on our thanks to PSNI for the role they had to ensure the event went ahead with minimum disruption. In August last year we had a negative experience and the police response had a role in that, so I was really pleased to see that there was an adequate police response and police presence throughout parade, which had a positive effect on residents.

An elected member thanked PSNI for work done re demonstration that took place in Newtownstewart.

A PCSP member raised that matter of complaints from residents re speeding and fly-tipping behind Creggan by businesses. The member was advising to reported fly- tipping to Council to deal with it as this was not a police matter.

An elected member requested an update on whether buses attending 12th August parade will be allowed to drive their cars into Ebrington.

Response: T/Chief Supt. Kearney informed the meeting that there was no update at present, but will be in touch as soon as a decision was made.

T/Chief Supt. Kearney confirmed that Supt. Willy Calderwood has been confirmed in his position on a permanent basis. She also confirmed that her appointment as T/Chief Supt for this district has been extended to May 2025 and will be reviewed then and is hopeful that this will ensure stability in the leadership team in this district.

The Chair welcomed the stability in the senior team in PSNI in our district and congratulated officers who've been confirmed in post.

Being know further business meeting closed at 12.10pm.

DSPCSP 65/24**NIHE Consultation on Community Safety Strategy 2025-2030**

The PCSP Manager advised members that the NIHE currently have a consultation on their Community Safety Strategy for 2025-2030 that is open. She advised that she has prepared a draft response and can circulate this to members for comment so that it can be submitted before the closing date, which is 30.09.24.

PCSP Manager & Members

DSPCSP 66/24**Date of Next Meeting**

The next meeting will take place on **Tuesday 30th September 2024 in the Strabane Council Chamber.**

The Chair thanked members for their attendance and input at the meeting which ended at approximately.

There being no further business, the meeting closed at 12.10pm.

Policing and Community Safety Partnership Meeting

PCSP Policing Committee Meeting 30th July 2024
Council Chamber, Guildhall

ACTIONS

Page 1 DSPCSP 60/24	Lisnagelvin Primary School It was agreed that the PCSP Manager would send the PSNI report provided to Lisnagelvin Primary School to PCSP Members.	PCSP Manager
Page 2 SDPCSP 60/24	PCSP Small Project Support It was agreed to provide a synopsis of the 5 projects that received funding for 2024/25 to PCSP Members	PCSP Manager
Page 2 DSPCSP 60/24	Conflict of Interest Declarations PCSP Members who have not yet completed their annual conflict of interest declaration are asked to submit this as soon as possible to the PCSP Office.	PCSP Members
Page 2 DSPCSP 60/24	JSA Stop & Search Powers Accountability Meetings Dates of the next meetings to be circulated to PCSP members who then have to advise which date they would prefer to attend.	PCSP Manager & PCSP Members
Page 3 DSPCSP 61/24	PSNI Drugs Strategy PSNI to ascertain if the PSNI drugs strategy can be shared with PCSP Members.	PSNI
Page 4 DSPCSP 61/24	Homicide Review of Katie Simpson case It was agreed that the PCSP Chair would write to the Minister for Justice requesting a homicide review of the Katie Simpson case, especially now that this falls outside current legislation.	PCSP Manager
Page 5 DSPCSP 61/24	Naloxone Pilot PSNI to request an update on the review of the Naloxone pilot in Belfast and report back to PCSP members.	PSNI
Page 5 DSPCSP 61/24	PSNI Report Card – stalking/harassment figures PSNI to incorporate the percentage of crimes reported to PSNI that result in action being taken in their next report card prepared for PCSP.	PSNI
Page 7 DSPCSP 63/24	PCSP Annual Report 2023/24 This report was approved and should be submitted to DOJ/NIPB.	PCSP Manager
Page 8 DSPCSP 65/24	NIHE Consultation on Community Safety Strategy 2025-2030 The PCSP Manager to draft a response to this consultation and circulate to PCSP members for comment/amendment and then submit before the closing date of 30.09.24.	PCSP Manager & PCSP Members