

Minutes of Policing and Community Safety Partnership Meeting Policing Committee

**Derry City and Strabane District Council
Tuesday 28 January 2025
Council Chamber, Guildhall at 10.00am**

Present: Ald Keith Kerrigan, Ald Niree McMorris, Cllr Sandra Duffy, Cllr Christopher Jackson, Cllr Fergal Leonard, Cllr Emma McGinley, Ald Darren Guy, Michaela Boyle, Ms Marie Brown, Mr Cathal Crumley, Mr Karl Duncan, Patsy McGonagle, Ms Karen McLaughlin, Ms Alison Wallace and Ms Linda Watson,

PSNI: CI Yvonne McManus and Insp Cathal Pearce.

In Attendance: Barry O Hagan (Head of Community Development & Leisure), Teresa Bradley (Inclusive & Shared Communities Manager, DCSDC), Cllr Martin Reilly (Chair), Louise Kitson (Project Co-ordinator) and Ciara Bond (Admin).

PCPM 01/25 Apologies

Cllr John Boyle, Cllr Antaine O'Feaghail, Mr David Jackson.

PCPM 02/25 Chairperson's Business

The Chair welcomed all members to the meeting in Council Chambers. The Chair thanked all who had helped members of the public on the day of storm Eowyn and over the past few days. Councillors and council workers were out in the community and provided assistance to the public, ie, water and showers, etc. It was great to see the community spirit in relation to this. He thanked all involved including PSNI in such extreme conditions.

The Chair thanked PCSP members who attended the training on Tuesday 21 January 2025 in the Everglades Hotel.

PCPM 03/25 Approval of Minutes of PCSP Meeting on 26/11/24

The minutes of the previous PCSP Meeting (DSPCSP 73/24-83/24) were approved as follows:

Proposed by: Ms Linda Watson

Seconded by: Cllr Sandra Duffy

PCPM 04/25 Matters Arising

Public Meeting, 20/01/25 in Guildhall – The Chair thanked officers and members for attending the Public Meeting in the Guildhall; it was a great opportunity to raise concerns.

PCSP Themed Public Meeting – the Chair stated that at a PCSP Public Meeting the PSNI would have the opportunity to answer questions.

DoJ have an important role to play in this effort, so with agreement of PCSP the themed Public Meeting on VAWG should be held as soon as possible. The Chair stated a Working Group would be established and invited interested members to get

involved to discuss what the PCSP Themed Public Meeting should look like.

Cllr Duffy referred to last Monday's Public Meeting which was positive. Survivors, community groups, and statutory agencies were in attendance. There were stories from survivors. Cllr Fergal Leonard was fantastic when he shared a story; it was emotional for all in the audience.

PCSP Training – Cllr Duffy referred to the training and stated it was really important with the PCSP element to have a 2-way conversation to ensure communities and residents know what PCSP are doing, to keep them informed and hold PCSP and PSNI to account.

VAWG - Cllr Duffy stated that VAWG has been one of the most prominent issues over the last couple of months. It is up to PCSP to demonstrate work that is going on. Cllr Duffy welcomed the fact that PCSP are going to progress it, as it is part of the strategic priorities in PCSP. Cllr Duffy confirmed that she would like to be part of the Working Group to discuss the themed Public Meeting.

Public Meeting, 20/01/25 in Guildhall - The Chair stated that all groups had contributed and it was great to hear the speakers and various issues discussed at the Public Meeting last week, held by the Mayor.

Ald Niree McMorris concurred with Cllr Duffy and referred to Cllr Fergal Leonard's story which was mindblowing. It was a successful meeting and she now looked forward to the PCSP themed Public Meeting.

PCSP Training – Ald McMorris said the training in the Everglades on 21/01/25 was good, impactful, and beneficial. Training in that method was welcomed going forward. It opened your mind that members can challenge issues. Both meetings were very inspiring.

E-Scooters - The Chair referred to a serious incident involving a 13-year-old boy in Buncrana. Cllr Hutton from the Moore DEA raised the issue of E-Scooters in Council and the fact that parks and greenways are being used.

The Chair said it was an environmental issue for fire brigades as the lithium batteries could cause fires if not charged properly. There are dangers when on greenways; they should only be used on private land.

The Chair encouraged the PSNI Communications Team to get the message out there on the use of E-Scooters.

There were no further Matters Arising.

PCPM 05/25

Presentation of Police Performance

Public Meeting 20/01/25 - Insp Cathal Pearce referred to the Public Meeting on 20/01/25 and mentioned the impact of the many stories told in person and how things affected families. Story telling always help people understand the impacts.

PCSP Themed Public Meeting - A PCSP themed Public Meeting would give members of the public to ask questions to get an understanding of what we are doing and what we are not doing.

Storm Eowyn - CI McManus thanked elected members for their help on the day of the storm as it was like an obstacle course at 5.30am. it was helpful that people were informed of the situation and thankfully nobody was injured. The storm was dealt with as a community,

E-Scooters – PSNI looked at what Belfast was doing in relation to E-Scooters and Quads and stated that Derry & Strabane were doing the same thing. PSNI are reviewing it with the possibility of using drones but there would be challenges around PSNI following a child on an E-Scooters in this manner. It was noted that on many

occasions children were not wearing helmets. Insp Robb, Ballyarnett, asked for the issue to be discussed as it is a City-wide problem.

It was agreed that there would be a presentation on E-Scooter and Drugs and the next PCSP PC Meeting. SIDs are also to be included.

PSNI

Members were referred to the detail/statistics within the report:

OUTCOME 1 – We Have a Safe Community

Violence Against Women and Girls & Domestic Abuse

Domestic Abuse

- Domestically Motivated Incidents have fallen by 9.1%
- Domestically Motivated Crimes have fallen by 11.08%
- From 20/12/24 – 02/01/25 1,288 domestic abuse calls were received by PSNI
- Domestic Abuse incidents down by 12.3% and 113 Domestic Abuse crimes down by 36.9%. 80.5% of these were recorded as Violence Against the Person.

Violence Against Women & Girls

- VAWG offences down by -13.6% - high visibility patrols following incidents in Waterside, combined with Op Seasons Greetings, was seen to have contributed to the deduction.

Theme 1 – Build Trust and Confidence

PSNI work collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure experiences of policing are utilised to inform training, policy development, and operational practices:

- Engagement with Women's Groups – crime prevention events and how to report incidents to the Police
- Additional funding from PCSP has been appreciated for cameras re high-risk victims of Domestic Abuse
- Numerous VAWG events have been held, including an event at Altnagelvin Hospital as staff felt uncomfortable leaving work

Theme 2 - Safer Spaces

PSNI support partners within the night-time economy to raise awareness of violence against women and girls to prevent offences occurring.

- Social Media – regular posts on SM to raise awareness of new legislation re stalking, domestic abuse, and safe socialising
- 'Safe Spaces' Operation (Halloween) was a successful approach and would now be incorporated into other large events
- Collaborative work with Women's Groups in the City
- Crime Prevention Officer attended over 10 events from 18/11/24 and provided advice and personal attack alarms. Thousands of personal attack alarms were given to different groups

Theme 3 – Relentless Perpetrator Pursuit

Police work collaboratively, harnessing their knowledge, experience, and expertise to ensure core policing outcomes are reflected in the Executive's Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy:

- PPB SH hold periodic meetings with Foyle Family Justice Centre to seek feedback and share learning
- PSNI have Sergeant to review all domestic abuse calls to ensure Police are maximising the criminal justice outcomes in domestic abuse offences
- All supervisors have attended Foyle Family Justice Centre and victims are encouraged to attend
- Focus on Repeat Victims and Repeat Offenders through SH and NPTs
- Continual review of investigations and processes to ensure Police remain Victim Focussed
- Wanted Person list is circulated internally to all teams with a particular focus on VAWG

Case Studies

Two case studies were referred to:

- 06/01/25 male sentenced to 4mths for common assault; restraining order was granted. This related to him assaulting his ex-partner at her home on 08/11/24 which was a breach of bail. He was charged to court and remanded in custody until the hearing. The restraining order will provide extra safeguarding for the victim.
- 10/02/25 – a male was sentenced to a 10wk custodial sentence for domestic abuse offence and threats to commit criminal damage. A restraining order was also granted. This related to a report by a female on 24/11/24 of coercive control and threats from her son; she was afraid of the situation becoming worse. Suspect was arrested, charged to court, and subsequently released with protective bail conditions. The restraining order will provide further safeguarding for the victim.

Assessment

- Many victims are reluctant to make a statement for a variety of reasons
- PSNI Work with partners and community groups to remove any barriers to reporting and participation in the criminal justice process
- PSNI will do their best to secure all evidence and support the victim in any way, alongside Victim Support, women's groups, and other support groups

Outcome/Result

- Within the district PSNI have governance to analyse, review, and respond
- PSNI will work hard to implement the 7-year Tackling VAWG Action Plan
- PSNI to continue to seek support from partners with implementing wider initiatives

PCPM 06/25

Comments/Questions

The Chair asked members to come forward with questions/comments.

PSNI Report - Michaela Boyle thanked PSNI for the report. She stated there was a lot of good initiatives and looked forward to that in the future. She referred to the way things were reported and stated it made it much easier to read.

Theme 3 – Relentless Perpetrator Pursuit Sergeant - Reference was made to the Sergeant who is to review all domestic abuse calls; this would have always been the case due to issues in the district and Ms Michaela Boyle said she would like to know how robust this was. The question was asked did it relate to repeat offenders and victims and how often did this happen? Ms Boyle stated she would like to hear about the processes and a review of all domestic violence calls to PSNI.

Incident in Strabane – Ms Michaela Boyle raised an issue regarding a lady in Strabane, where she did not get the response she should have, to get the person brought to justice. She carried out a lot of work on this on her own. PSNI did help even though it was across the border. Ms Boyle queried if this included NHPT and was the Sgt in place or was it a one-off? She stated it would be good to hear more on that, maybe at another meeting.

Action Plan of VAWG - Cllr Sandra Duffy thanked the PSNI for the comprehensive report. She commented on last Monday's meeting and the 7-year Action Plan of VAWG. Cllr Duffy stated it would be good to hear in more detail as to how PSNI are moving forward with the Action Plan and how it is being implemented.

Night-time Economy - Cllr Duffy referred to part of the report on night-time economy and stated that more needed to be carried out around the bars in the City with door staff re vulnerable girls and she asked how this was being implemented by PSNI. Cllr Duffy commended PSNI on the heavy presence around the City.

Report of Woman Followed - Ald Darren Guy informed members that he had spoken to a girl who walks home regularly and was followed by a man known to her, so she approached him. He in turn went to Police and reported her. Another male with a criminal record, accompanied this man, and both men followed her. The lady was asked to record times and contact Ald Guy again. Ald Guy stated whilst PSNI keep records these are no good if something happens.

Domestic Violence Figures - Ms Marie Brown stated that Domestic Violence had gone up and not down and queried how the stats were recorded. She is sceptical of the figures in case they are altered so they do not look bad. She referred to the 3 Domestic Violence officers who have to cover a wide area and stated that if the resources were not there, there would not be a result. Feeling confident is not where it should be. Policing is required to focus on VAWG for the area and it is known that PSNI are under resourced.

The issue needs to get PCSP support, Ms Brown stated she was worried about VAWG and said there needed to be confidence in coming forward as people were not reporting incidents. Ms Brown suggested a meeting with members to look at the issue; there needed to be discretion about cases going forward to PPS. Individual women are gathering to put a complaint into criminal justice system.

Building Trust & Confidence – Alison Wallace stated a lot more work could be done in each of the areas and more thought and working together was required going forward.

Cyber Crime Support – Ald Niree McMorris asked was cyber-crime support citywide or further afield and could the PSNI resource this, as 50 people waiting to be charged was worrying. The issue needs to be reviewed/looked at quicker.

Response from PSNI

Review of Calls by Sergeant – all calls are reviewed by Sgt/Supervisor and all domestic incidents are recorded appropriately. All calls are scrutinised and reviewed twice. PSNI ensure confidence and consistency by ensuring perpetrators spend the maximum time in custody. The priority re VAWG is to ensure Police understand the importance of an incident in order to gather all the evidence. The process is being reviewed to determine if there are any priorities. PSNI confirmed they also advise on child exploitation; there is an importance on children, and DASH referrals. All is in place and not left to chance. It was confirmed that the position of Sergeant was a temporary thing to ensure confidence and understanding is there.

When a victim contacts PSNI and reports an incident, the issue is how PSNI deal with this and obtain information. Cases could be ongoing for months. The Action Plan is linked to the Local Policing Plan; indicators are what PSNI are strategically working on. Needs are victim focussed and needs to be fit for purpose.

Groups focussing on VAWG - PSNI referred to what Alison Wallace said – public spaces and regeneration of parks are part of that. The Crime Prevention Officer could give examples and a list of what groups are completing training to focus on VAWG. Meetings are held with women's organisations and everyone is doing their part so there is no duplication or gaps.

The suggestion of representatives from different areas to discuss issues and actions going forward would be considered.

Night-time Economy - has changed since Covid; need to work smarter when dealing with calls. Resources in PSNI is a big issue, colleagues within PSNI work extremely hard. It was confirmed that how numbers were counted was out of their control.

Drugs and Economy – With regard to Ms Alison Wallace's query re drugs and economy the PSNI confirmed they need to talk to the public, deliver a good service, and need to know why people think it is not a good service.

Insp Cathal Pearce stated that they shared the frustrations of members and said it had an impact on investigations. Members were informed that to bear in mind, until a case goes to court, the perpetrator could gain bail.

Resources - Insp Cathal Pearce spoke to the Inspector re the impact on resources. He said there were 3 officers in CSU (Cyber Support Unit), one in Strand Road, Derry. He confirmed if someone was arrested and on bail, the case could take 7-9 mths, and if someone was entitled to a service then PSNI had to give it. Insp Pearce said he would welcome an uplift in resources.

DSD moved 1 officer to another team and confirmed there were 2x teams of 5. The majority of cases are dealt with by Judge Rafferty, 60% on drug supplies, 40-50% related to phone evidence. Previously arrests would have been made exclusively on drug supply, now many arrests are from evidence on phones and getting evidence on conversations. An example was given; if someone was on bail for 7 mths, a different department might put a submission in, and therefore it would push the case down the list. PSNI therefore try to charge when they can.

Question re Convictions and Bail - the PSNI were thanked for the response and it was noted that PSNI had their hands tied when dealing with cases and to try to bring a conviction. PCSP could possibly provide more support.

Mr Patsy McGonagle referred to someone in Omagh who got bail and said people operating in these circles know this therefore they will offend again. It happens constantly and perpetrators are walking the streets when out on bail. If there is a missing link it should be sorted.

Insp Pearce stated that the person involved had a limited history. Bail was opposed to remand in custody but a generous sum of money was presented by family. If breaches are broken there are only so many chances given.

Mr McGonagle stated there was a gap and referred to a guy that had drug parties in the house. PSNI need to check on those out on bail and where they are.

Drugs/VAWG and DA Officers - Cllr Jackson thanked PSNI for the report and the detailed content. He referred to the issue of drugs and VAWG which are big priorities with the vast majority being cyber based. Cllr Jackson mentioned the fact that Domestic Abuse Officers were given a wider remit and was shocked to hear this. He said this information should be in the report; if resources are not there PCSP needed to know. It was queried when they were given the wider remit as it had an impact on the community and VAWG.

Mr Karl Duncan said officers seemed to point more in the direction of the level of repeat offending in the district. He stated that it would be useful if education on drugs was revised for schools.

PSNI Response - Insp Pearce said he did not have figures with him. He said there was a substance misuse circle. He referred to a member of the public, (part of a crime team), in custody for the use of and supply of drugs. Insp Pearce said it was very frustrating for PSNI. People are put before the courts to be actioned. Repeat offenders/suspects were in court due to substance misuse and because of the financial rewards. He stated the problem was global, not just in Northern Ireland.

Insp Pearce referred to a training package re NH Officers for the Waterside and Cityside and said the content was being revised after a period of 15 years. Drugs have moved from legal highs to prescribed drugs misuse and Spice.

Insp Pearce referred to terrorism, violence, and drugs and stated that 70% would have convictions. The majority would have been caught three or four times. He confirmed that good work was being carried out with the supply of a school training package. Gone are the days of sniffing glue and the use of cans. Derivatives of Spice and Cannabis are being used. He referred to the regulation of vaping that would with Council; they would take the lead and PSNI would support Council in their decision.

Insp Pearce referred to the reduction of resources and stated it was not specific resources/district resources, more the fact that it could impact high-risk incidents and but confirmed there was a protocol for that.

Insp Pearce informed members that he would share a slideshow on crime with members.

PSNI

Drugs - Ald McMorris queried bail conditions and asked if someone had 18kg of drugs was there a proforma if it was their first incident? She was there anyone not getting bail?

Insp Pearce stated it caused problems for arrests when a Constable and Sergeant had to attend court two or three times a week. When someone is put before the court with an overnight charge, a criteria for remand in custody must be followed (ie, risk of further offending, violence, etc). PSNI look at the criteria which is presented to the

Judge. PSNI are open and transparent and do all that they can to secure custody. On various occasions they may get a lesser amount with bail despite the robust research. The court makes their own decisions. Comments are shared re monitoring and bail conditions. The management of bail must be robust. PSNI confirmed they do as many checks as possible. Bail is the necessary evil, even when the timescales are 8-24 mths to get to court and maybe 9-12 mths on remand/bail before attending court.

Cllr Jackson commented on the seizure of drugs in the Waterside area and said that a search on Saturday night had been prolonged. There was a community impact with regard to videos being circulated; it was useful for people to see the result. He said 18kg was a significant seizure destined for the city and district; it was brilliant news that dangerous drugs were taken off the street. Organised groups and drug gangs are within the city and district with the motive being money and drugs. It would be important to get the message out there and suggested an action for that.

The Chair said that Officers could be informed. CI Yvonne McManus confirmed a photo shoot would be carried out with content to go on social media platforms.

PSNI

It was agreed that PCSP would support the Recruitment drive of PSNI Officers. Information would be shared on Social Media platforms.

PCSP/PSNI

PSNI confirmed that they have established analysis, review, and response moving forward. PSNI confirmed they are planning for Easter Monday Parade has begun.

Building Confidence in Policing - Ms Linda Watson referred to building confidence in policing and stated it was not working in the Waterside; she did not know who to contact. An updated list was requested with contact numbers of NH Police. Ms Watson stated she had contacted PSNI prior to Christmas and last week and was to get a response on Wednesday.

Money Lending - Ms Alison Wallace stated there was engagement with other activities, such as money lending, and queried if PCSP could do anything around that. There was a programme in Ballyarnett that the PSNI were involved in and wondered if there was anything PCSP could do in partnership with regards to money lending. She stated that 60% of women were from the Waterside in relation to money lending and said it was an issue for vulnerable women. Groups in the City are funded for programmes on tackling paramilitarism and on women also. She concurred with what Cllr Jackson had said and work should be conducted to keep the youths out of harm's way.

Pipe Bomb - Ald Darren Guy referred to a pipe bomb incident in Canterbury Park. He asked if PSNI had any information on this.

Tik Tok Video - There was upset with regards to a TikTok video in Gobnascale where shots were fired over a coffin at a funeral procession of an INLA Representative; two people were wearing uniforms. He said this should not be happening with grown men dressed like this and it was getting beyond a joke. Ald Guy asked PSNI were there any arrests?

Ald Guy said that with budgets being cut by DoJ was it not about time that TV companies supported this by putting videos together and said that TV stations needed to be doing this for free. It would allow the budget to be used more effectively.

Women being targeted for Drugs/Financial Abuse - Ms Marie Brown said there was an issue with women being targeted for drugs and said that there was a high number of children going into care due to this. She said that the issue needed to be addressed.

Ms Brown confirmed there was a significant increase in financial abuse and referred to financial programmes that were available. She confirmed that Sarah (at Women's Aid) could deliver the programme.

There are money lenders as well as drug dealers, some have no homes but are living in hotels, etc. Ms Brown said families should be kept at home and working as a Team would provide the best outcome for families. She stated that the Criminal Justice System was part of it. Ms Brown said PPU were not really communicating with Police; she confirmed it was difficult to get people through the processes.

The Chair referred to safe lending and stated members of the public should borrow from a reputable lender.

Current NH Team - CI McManus confirmed that whilst NH Teams had depleted, she would check the list on the PSNI website was current. She encouraged all members to ring 101 as PSNI cannot create a log if not in the office. She reminded all that members of the community should report incidents at the time and said there would be a backlog until PSNI had more resources.

CI McManus stated that PSNI were looking at contingencies on what to do if there was only one person in the Team. There is demand in certain areas and then areas where information is not reported.

Confidence in Policing - Ms Watson stated that she was not getting any contact from NH Officers, maybe once every 2/3 weeks. The public are ringing 101 on the phone for so long that they hang up. The communication is extremely poor; there needs to be more communication with each other.

PSNI Response - CI McManus mentioned Karen Mullen re training. She confirmed she was happy to invite the unit to get involved and provide resources. She referred to what Ms Brown had said; there is silo working.

CI McManus stated she would investigate the issue of the pipe bomb/device and the Tik Tok video discussed.

PSNI

Confidence in Policing - Ald McMorris referred to raising confidence with NH Teams. She stated she had also rung 101 and there was a long wait; it is an ongoing situation. She confirmed if she does not get through, she rings the Duty Inspector.

CI McManus informed members of the importance to use the process available as opposed to ringing a Duty Inspector directly.

PCPM 07/25

Any Other Business

3 Year Strategy involving Action Plan - The Chair informed members that this was due on 14/03/25. He stated that a meeting had been arranged on Thursday to speak to Prof Marie Breen-Smyth.

PCSP Community Safety & Crime Survey – it was confirmed this would be issued on Social Media platforms.

PCSP

Special Meeting of PCSP – a Special Meeting re Strategic Assessment and the Action Plan to be arranged in February. Teresa informed Members that there is a meeting set up with the PCSP Manager for Thursday 30/01/25 to update the PCSP Manager on the appointment of Professor Marie Breen-Smyth in relation to progressing with the three

year Strategic Assessment and PCSP Action Plan.

Teresa also informed Members that she would update the PCSP Manager in relation to Members request for the Public Themed Meeting on EVAWG including the need for a sub group to be arranged as soon as possible.

PCSP

Budget from DoJ – Ms Wallace enquired about the budget from DoJ. The Chair/Teresa indicated it would be similar to this year, therefore PCSP were to work from last year's budget.

Cllr Jackson stated he had seen the results of the Public Meeting and was impressed with Prof Marie Breen-Smyth. He asked if there had been a tender exercise. Teresa responded and confirmed there was a short time-frame; Quotes had been sought in December 2024, unfortunately there had been no returns. Teresa updated Members that Officers sought advice from Council's Procurement Manager with regards to developing a Single Tender Action to procure the services of Professor Marie Breen Smyth.

PCPM 08/25

Date of Next Meeting

The next **PCSP Meeting** has been arranged for Tuesday 26 February 2025 in the Council Chamber, Strabane at 10am.

The meeting ended at approximately 12.08 pm.

Policing and Community Safety Partnership Meeting Policing Committee

**Derry City and Strabane District Council
Tuesday 28 January 2025
Council Chamber, Guildhall**

ACTIONS

PCPM 05/25 Page 3	E-Scooters It was agreed that there would be a presentation on E-Scooter and Drugs and the next PCSP PC Meeting. SIDs are also to be included.	PSNI
PCPM 06/25 Page 7	Slideshow on Crime Insp Pearce confirmed he would share a slideshow on crime with members.	PSNI
PCPM 06/25 Page 8	Drugs CI McManus confirmed a photoshoot and content would be arranged and posted on social media platforms.	PSNI
PCPM 06/25 Page 8	PSNI Recruitment Drive PCSP to support the recruitment drive of PSNI Officers with information shared on social media platforms.	PCSP/PSNI
PCPM 06/25 Page 8	Pipe Bomb & Tik Tok Video CI McManus to investigate the issue of the pipe bomb/device and the Tik Tok video.	PSNI
PCPM 07/25 Page 9	PCSP Community Safety & Crime Survey It was agreed that this would be issued on all social media platforms.	PCSP
PCPM 07/25 Page 9	PCSP Special Meeting Special Meeting re Strategic Assessment and Action Plan to be arranged in February including a working group on the Public Themed Meeting on EVAWG.	PCSP