

**Magherafelt DPP**  
**Annual Report 2003-04**

## **SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION**

### **Foreword by Chairperson**

Since its conception, and especially over the past year, the Magherafelt District Policing Partnership has been working extremely hard to enhance Policing in our area. The Partnership, which naturally is made up of people with varying views, has kept focused on a single ambition; that of making Magherafelt District a safer place for all its residents and visitors.

The Partnership members have collectively listened to the concerns and fears of the local people, and then in consultation with the PSNI have agreed a positive way forward addressing many of these issues. This process has sometimes been difficult bearing in mind that many of us live in a world where we want immediate results, however I believe with continuing effort and perseverance we can obtain the final result on your behalf.

Unfortunately the reality is, on many occasions only negative issues makes the news headlines but positive progress has been made on many fronts in regard to local Policing; however there still remains much to be done.

In the Magherafelt District Area I believe we all recognise that there are still difficulties that remain and cause us all concern. The Magherafelt District Policing Partnership has endeavoured to prioritise these concerns when setting the targets in the local Policing Plan for this incoming year, therefore enabling the local PSNI Commander and his Officers to focus their efforts on the issues that really count.

I would again take this opportunity to thank all who have helped in so many ways but reiterate that **Policing** is the responsibility of the whole community and therefore as we continue this process we will need to redouble our efforts to make our District a safer and better place for all.

Paul McLean  
Chairman

District Policing Partnership  
(Magherafelt.)

## **Acknowledgement from the District Commander**

The formation of Magherafelt District Policing Partnership has been an exceptionally positive development for both the local community and police service. The DPP is representative of a wide variety of views within the district and is helping to focus policing on the real problems that local people face.

I encourage you to attend the public meetings where you can witness at first hand the ways in which the DPP not only challenges police responses but also influences and moulds your policing service.

The targets that have been set for me by the policing board and the DPP are now the priorities to which my officers focus their efforts. Very good progress was made against the targets set last year. The 2004 priorities relating to under age drinking, vandalism and concerns about older people are receiving my attention. Further targets relating to violent crimes and serious casualties on our roads cause great concern to all of us and I have introduced a variety of initiatives to deal with these issues. The DPP members will expect results and we will strive to deliver.

Reacting to emergencies and calls for assistance will always be an important policing service. However, to make real progress in community safety, including the reduction of crime, we also need to use a problem solving approach, implementing meaningful long-term solutions that prevent crimes and problems reoccurring. This is best achieved by engagement at all levels in the community and the members of the District Policing Partnership provide a wealth of expertise in this arena.

## **Introduction**

The participants in the multi-party negotiations, which ended in the Good Friday Agreement, believed that there was an opportunity for a new approach on how policing is delivered in Northern Ireland.

Those involved in writing the Good Friday Agreement agreed that an Independent Commission would be set up. This Commission became known as the Patten Commission, after its chairman Chris Patten.

The Patten Commission was appointed to make recommendations for future policing arrangements in Northern Ireland, to make sure that:

- the police service is delivered in constructive and inclusive partnerships with the community at all levels;
- the police operate within a clear framework of accountability to the law and the community they serve;
- there are clear arrangements that allow local people and their political representatives to express their views and concerns about policing, and to identify and prioritise publicly the policing policies that effect their local area.

An important theme of the Patten Report is that policing should be more localised by creating District Command Units that would cover the same area as district councils. The Commission also said that regular discussions on policing issues should take place at district level between the police and the community. DPPs were recommended as the means of achieving this. The Government accepted this recommendation and legislation was enacted which led to the creation of DPPs.

## **Magherafelt District Policing Partnership**

### **Profile of Council**

Magherafelt District Council area covers approximately 217 square miles and includes five main urban settlements, thirteen villages, and several hamlets. The District is situated on the western shores of Lough Neagh, bound to the east by the River Bann, Lough Neagh and Lough Beg, and to the west by the Sperrin Mountains. The town of Magherafelt is the administrative centre for the district, a market town in the centre of what has traditionally been an agricultural community.

### **Demographics**

The population of the Magherafelt District Council area according to the 2001 census was 39,780. Of this, 20,041 (50.4%) were male and 19,739 (49.6%) were female. In the population 26% were under 16 years old and 15% aged 60 and over. In the census 64% stated they were from a Catholic Community Background and 35% stated they were from a 'Protestant and Other Christian (including Christian related)' Community Background.

### **Representativeness of DPP**

The Northern Ireland Policing Board employed external consultants to recruit independent members onto the DPPs. The posts were advertised widely to ensure that as many people as possible had the opportunity to apply. The consultant shortlisted the applications against the published criteria. Applications from those candidates who met the criteria were then sent to the relevant council. A panel, made up of a number of councillors and an independent member, considered the applications and interviewed the applicants.

After the interviews, each District Council sent a list containing at least twice the number of suitable candidates as there were vacancies, to the Policing Board. The Board made the final appointments and notified the Council of their decision.

### **List of DPP members**

Magherafelt DPP consists of seventeen members:

Eight independent members of the public;

Mr J Campbell  
Mr J Conlon  
Mrs M Donnelly  
Ms S Ewing  
Mrs M McCormack  
Miss A Scott  
Dr D Shortall  
Ms F Symington

And nine local Councillors;

Cllr P McLean Chairman  
Cllr K Lagan Vice-Chairperson  
Cllr Rev Dr R T Wm McCrea  
Cllr R A Montgomery  
Cllr T J Catherwood  
Cllr P H McErlean  
Cllr J A McBride  
Cllr J Junkin  
Cllr G Shiels

### **Funding**

The Northern Ireland Policing Board funds 75% of Magherafelt DPP while Magherafelt District Council funds the remaining 25%. Overall responsibility for ensuring the effective operation of the DPP lies with Magherafelt District Council's Chief Executive, while the DPP Manager undertakes day-to-day management of the DPPs affairs.

## **SECTION TWO: OUR FUNCTION AND PROCESSES**

The strength of a DPP is that it provides a unique opportunity, through a partnership between elected members and the community, for local people to shape local policing. The DPP facilitates dialogue between the police and the local community. This is achieved by the following:

- Identifying local policing issues and views to the District Commander on any matter concerning the policing of the district
- Establishment of policing priorities for the local Policing Plan in conjunction with the District Commander
- Monitoring the performance of the police in carrying out the local Policing Plan
- Monitoring the performance of the police in carrying out the relevant aspects of the Annual Policing Plan
- Obtaining the views of the public concerning the policing of the district
- Gaining the public's co-operation in preventing crime

Members of the public are welcome to attend all public meetings of the DPP, which offer the opportunity to observe the PSNI District Commander's response to questions posed by DPP members. Magherafelt DPP holds bi-monthly public meetings. These meetings are held in different venues throughout the district to make sure that as many people as possible have the opportunity to attend. They are also advertised in the local press. The DPP members may also hold private meetings before the public meetings.

Members of the public have also the right to ask questions of the police, through the Chairman of the DPP. The process for doing this is to submit a written question to the DPP Manager who will bring the matter before the next public meeting of the DPP.

The DPP welcomes questions from any person living or working in the district or any person directly affected by the policing of the district. As far as is practical all questions received by the DPP will be presented at a public meeting, unless legal or other specific reasons prohibit their presentation to the meeting.

Alternatively any member of the public or any organisation may choose to ask a member of the DPP to raise an issue or ask a question on their behalf.

The DPP will consult with the community on an ongoing basis to find out what the main local policing issues are and obtain your views on the policing of the district. This is achieved through a combination of the following methods:

- A public consultation survey every two years
- Focus Group sessions to consolidate issues raised in the survey and at DPP meeting

The information obtained from consultation is used as the basis for discussions between the police and the DPP to inform the local policing plan and set the targets for crime prevention in the district

## **Training Undertaken**

Members of the DPP have attended various conferences, training days, and seminars over the past year. These range from discussions with representatives from Boston on their policing and community issues to looking at neighbourhood watch schemes.

## **Consultation Process**

How we canvassed views from members of the public

### NISRA Survey

The Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA), on behalf of the NIPB and DPPs, undertook a postal survey in 2003. This was sent to 1,415 households in the district. From this survey 33% of respondents indicated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with policing in the district. 18% of respondents indicated that they were dissatisfied or very dissatisfied with policing in the district. With regard to DPPs 55% of respondents indicated that they had heard of them. This survey provided the DPP with guidance to the issues the local community felt were a priority

### MORI

Magherafelt DPP has employed MORI to undertake three Focus Groups on its behalf during June/July 2004 to follow up on issues raised from the NISRA survey.

## **How we have impacted on Local Policing**

### Plan/targets

The NISRA survey and local consultation provided guidance to the DPP on the policing problems that local people saw as a priority. The local Police Commander, Superintendent John Lindsay, worked with the DPP in identifying and setting the targets for the Magherafelt Policing Plan.

At the DPP public meetings the local Commander provides a report on how the Police are meeting these targets.

### Localised issues

At the DPP meetings local people, through submission of questions, and DPP members can question the local Commander on issues they feel are important to the District. If no answer can be provided at the meeting, it will be followed up in a written reply. This allows the DPP to act as a general forum for discussion and consultation.

## **Communication Strategy**

The Magherafelt DPP has adopted a Publication Scheme in accordance with the Freedom of Information Act 2000. They have also adopted a Communications Strategy, both of which are available online.

## **Raising the profile of the DPP and Community Policing Issues**

Public notices – The DPP advertises its meetings in all the local newspapers before each meeting.

Press releases – After each meeting a press release is distributed to the local media

Information Events – The DPP aims to hold these at least once a year.

## **Strategy for Gaining the Co-operation of the Public**

Magherafelt DPP aims to achieve this through the following:

Monitoring and holding the PSNI to account – Having an accountable Police force was recognised as a priority in the Patten Report. Magherafelt DPP feel strongly that by making the local Police accountable to local representatives we can give people an input and thus ‘ownership’ of their Police service.

Themed Meetings – Certain sections of our community may be more susceptible to the fear of crime or be perceived as the cause of crime. To address this the DPP will be holding themed public meeting concentrating on these members of our community, such as the elderly or youth. It is important that their opinions are taken into account and that links are built.

Policing Plan Input – Magherafelt DPP worked closely with the local District Commander on setting the policing priorities for the District for the forthcoming year based on the local NISRA survey and local consultation.

Identifying Problems & Working with the Community Safety Partnership – The Magherafelt DPP’s main role is to monitor and hold the PSNI to account. Through consultation, the DPP will highlight specific areas of concern within the district to the PSNI. The local Community Safety Partnership is made up of various statutory, community and voluntary agencies that are working together to promote community safety in the district. The DPP will engage with the Magherafelt Community Safety Partnership to help develop projects to address these concerns.

Information Events – Magherafelt DPP held an information night on at the end of its first year on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2004 in the Terrace Hotel, Magherafelt. The aim was to have an engagement with statutory agencies, community and voluntary agencies, and local community groups, in order to discuss issues pertinent to them. It also provided a way for them to get to know members of their DPP. Over 100 people attended this event.

## **How we report on activities to promote openness and transparency**

Internet – Magherafelt DPP has its own website, [www.magherafeltdpp.org](http://www.magherafeltdpp.org). Minutes of the public minutes are published on this site. Dates and venues of upcoming meetings are also advertised on this site.

Freedom of Information – The DPP has adopted a Publications Scheme in order to make material freely available to the public.

Public Consultation (NISRA/MORI) – NISRA, on behalf of the DPP, has undertaken a survey in the district. The results were used to guide the development of the Policing Plan. The DPP has also employed MORI to undertake Focus Group research in 2004.

Media Coverage – The DPP issues press releases after its meetings to the local media in order to inform the residents of Magherafelt on its activities.

## **SECTION THREE: YEAR END ACCOUNTS**

### **Magherafelt District Council District Policing Partnership Statement of Income & Expenditure Year to 31 March 2004**

| <b>Income</b>                       | £      |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Grant from Policing Board           | 78712  |
| Contribution From Council           | 26238  |
|                                     | <hr/>  |
|                                     | 104950 |
| <br>                                |        |
| <b>Expenditure</b>                  |        |
| Staff Costs                         | 16536  |
| Main Public Consultation (NIPB)     | 1719   |
| Secondary Consultation              |        |
| Public Meetings (Hire of Buildings) | 927    |
| Publicity                           | 2107   |
| Running Costs                       | 51861  |
| Furniture & Equipment               | 773    |
| Grants to Groups                    |        |
| Core Training (NIPB)                | 7739   |
| Establishment Costs (NIPB)          | 15788  |
| Other                               | 7500   |
|                                     | <hr/>  |
|                                     | 104950 |
| <br>                                |        |
| Surplus/ (Deficit) for period       | -      |