



23<sup>rd</sup> September 2004.

# *DPP press release*

## **District Policing Partnership holds Meeting in Public**

The Omagh DPP meeting in Public was held at the Cornerstone, Beragh, Wednesday night last, 22<sup>nd</sup> September. The meeting, the first to be held in Beragh, gave members of the DPP and members of the public, the opportunity to hear a progress report by the District Commander, Superintendent Michael Skuce, on policing within the District and to ask questions relating to crime and police performance.

In his presentation, Superintendent Skuce was pleased to report that overall crime for the District had fallen to 956 crimes recorded for the period April to August 2004, a reduction of 22.5% on overall crime for the same period in 2003. The District Commander went on to report that in real terms there were 112 fewer victims of crime in the Omagh area from April to August 2004, when compared to the same months last year. When referring to the downward trend he said that, although he was confident that good community policing was having an impact in reducing crime, the PSNI was determined not to be complacent about the figures and would be working hard to see the downward trend continue.

Although he was able to report successes in reducing overall crime for the District, he had to concede that the Fintona area had experienced a rise in crime during the period with a total of 113 crimes recorded, a rise of 15.3% on the same period last year.

Commenting on the figures, Superintendent Skuce said, "By targeting resources appropriately, working with other statutory agencies in a joined up way and gaining the support of the community, the PSNI can significantly reduce crime and anti-social behaviour within the District."

During the meeting issues such as fear of crime amongst older people, rural crime and how the police engage with the community were discussed. In particular, the DPP were keen to see reassurance being given to older people in the community that they were not more likely to become a victim of crime. Speaking after the meeting Omagh DPP Chairman, Cllr Rainey said, "We welcome the District Commander's report that crime in the District has been reduced and that crimes against older people in particular are minimal." He added "However, perception is everything and organisations working with older people, the PSNI and the DPP need to provide reassurance, sound, practical advice and a sense of security, balancing negative images within the media that reinforce fear and insecurity among older people," said Councillor Rainey.

Following the District Commander's presentation, DPP members, and members of the public, took the opportunity to put forward questions related to local policing issues for response by the District Commander. Discussion included the development of neighbourhood watch, positive engagement with young people and the future of rural police stations, following an update on PSNI consultation on the closure of Dromore station.

Speaking after the meeting Councillor Allan Rainey, Chairman of the Omagh DPP, reflected on the level of participation and discussion shown by local people.

"In deciding to come to Beragh, members of the DPP felt it was important that individuals from the community, were given the opportunity to come along, express their concerns and views about local policing and crime, and to hear a response from the District Commander for the Omagh area." Councillor Rainey said. "I am delighted that we had such a good response and would like to thank those members of the public who attended the meeting tonight at the Cornerstone", he added.

Ends.

For further information contact Mary Brogan, Omagh DPP Manager, Omagh District Council Offices on 028 82245321 extn. 306.

## Notes to Editor

- The Omagh DPP is an autonomous body within Omagh District Council, representative of the local community. It will work to ensure that the community lies at the heart of effective policing and will work to consult openly and inclusively with the local community about crime and policing issues.
- The DPP aims to represent and express people's views; discuss and prioritise local concerns; and work with local police to help draw up local policing priorities that focus on, and tackle, community problems.