

Code of Practice

on the

Exercise of Functions and Responsibilities

by

District Policing Partnerships

Northern Ireland Policing Board

October 2005

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1. Introduction

- 1.1** This Code is a revision of the Code of Practice on the Functions and responsibilities of the District Policing Partnership (DPP) and is issued under section 19(1) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, (the Act) which states:

The Policing Board shall issue, and may revise, a Code of Practice containing guidance on the exercise by District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) of their functions.

- 1.2** As part of the consultation process the Policing Board have sent copies of the Code to:

- The Secretary of State
- The District Councils and Chief Executives of District Councils
- The Chief Constable of PSNI
- District Policing Partnerships and DPP Managers
- The PSNI staff associations
- The Equality Commission

- 1.3** This Code has been screened for adverse equality impacts. Following screening it has been determined that an Equality Impact Assessment is not required.

- 1.4** The Policing Board has produced separate “Financial Guidelines for District Policing Partnerships”. In addition the Policing Board will produce “Operational Guidelines for District Policing Partnerships” on specific topics and in response either to changing circumstances or to needs identified. These guidance documents complement this Code of Practice and are designed to allow for timely and detailed guidance to assist DPPs to carry out their statutory duties. This Code of Practice details the arrangements the DPP is required to make in fulfilling the following statutory duties:

- a) the public are consulted on issues relating to policing and their views on policing are gathered;
- b) the views of the public with regard to policing are analysed and priority issues identified and presented to the District Commander to be considered for inclusion in the Local Policing Plan;
- c) the DPP monitors the performance of the police in carrying out:
 - I. the Annual Policing Plan as it applies to the district;
 - II. the Local Policing Plan for the district;
- d) the DPP engages to gain the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime;
- e) the DPP acts as a general forum for discussion in matters relating to the policing of the district.

1.5 Throughout this Code wherever reference is made to the District Commander the provision shall also apply to his or her deputy as appropriate.

1.6 This Code should be readily available at all council offices for consultation and reference by members of the council, council staff and members of the public. In particular each member of the DPP should receive an individual copy of the Code. The Council / DPP should consider other options open to them to ensure that the Code reaches a wide and diverse audience.

1.7 The Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) should receive a copy of the Code, as should all PSNI District Commanders. The Code should also be available at all operational police premises for consultation and reference by police officers, civilian employees of the police service and by members of the public.

- 1.8** DPPs have been designated as ‘public authorities’ under the Commission for Complaints (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 as amended by the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and are therefore subject to the statutory duties placed on them by Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998.
- 1.9** In discharging their duties the DPP should ensure that it takes account of the guidance published by the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland entitled: “Guidance for Implementing Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998”.
- 1.10** The DPP is subject to the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 as amended by the provisions of section 78, paragraph 25 of Schedule 6 to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

2. The Roles and Responsibilities of the DPP

- 2.1** The DPP is a body established under section 14 (1) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, by the local council. The council has overall responsibility for ensuring the effective operation of the DPP.
- 2.2** In practical terms the DPP is a partnership between the local council and the community. Its membership is made up of political members who are councillors nominated to the DPP by the local council and independent members drawn from the local community and appointed to the DPP by the Policing Board. Paragraph 4(1a) of Schedule 3 to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, as amended states
- “In appointing independent members of a DPP the Board shall so far as practicable secure that the members of the DPP (taken together) are representative of the community in the district”.*
- 2.3** If a council fails to establish a DPP or fails to comply with the requirements contained in Part III of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000; the Secretary of State may, after consulting the Policing Board, direct the council to take such action as is necessary to ensure that a DPP is established.
- 2.4** The duties and responsibilities of a DPP are set out in section 16 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, which states:

The functions of a DPP shall be:

- a) to provide views to the district commander for any police district which is, or is included in, the district and to the Board on any matter concerning the policing of the district;*

- b) to monitor the performance of the police in carrying out:*
 - i. the policing plan in relation to the district; and*

ii. the local policing plan applying to the district or any part of the district;

c) to make arrangements for obtaining:

i. the views of the public about matters concerning the policing

of the district; and

ii. the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime;

d) to act as a general forum for discussion and consultation on matters affecting the policing of the district; and

e) such other functions as are conferred on it by any other statutory provision.

2.5 The legislation detailed above sets out the main areas of responsibility for the DPP. In order to meet these legal requirements the DPP should :

- **consult** with the public to find out what issues in relation to policing and crime are of concern within that council district;
- **identify** local policing priorities arising from the consultation and recommend these to the District Commander so that they can be taken into account when the Local Policing Plan is being drawn up;
- **monitor** police performance against the objectives contained in the Local Policing Plan and the Annual Policing Plan as it relates to the district;
- **engage** with the community to obtain the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime;

- **act** as a general forum for discussion and consultation on all matters relating to the policing of the district.
- 2.6** Within six months from the date it was established the DPP should produce a Strategic Plan for its four-year term of office developed around the five key headings as set out at 2.5 above.
- 2.7** The DPP should also annually develop an Operational Plan for the five key headings set out at 2.5 above which will identify how the DPP will achieve the objectives set out in the Strategic plan.
- 2.8** Copies of the Strategic Plan and the annual Operational Plan should be sent to the Council, to the Policing Board and to the District Commander, and the DPP should ensure that these documents are available to all interested groups within the district.
- 2.9** Copies of the Strategic Plan and the Operational Plan should be available on request in accessible formats such as Braille, large print, disc and audio cassette, other languages and to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English. The DPP should also consider how to reach a wide and diverse audience with these documents.
- 2.10** The District Policing Partnerships (Northern Ireland) Order 2005 extends the lifespan of existing DPP, which would otherwise cease to operate at the date of the next local general election, until the new DPPs are established thereby avoiding a period where no DPPs would operate during this transitional period.
- 2.11** The “transitional DPP” will continue to exercise the same functions as the previous DPP. The transitional DPP will come into being on the day of the local general election and end on the day before the reconstitution date of the new DPP

3. Public Consultation

- 3.1** The DPP should consult with the public in order to become aware of the issues within the local community concerning the policing of the district. The information obtained through this exercise should be included in the DPP's Consultation Report.
- 3.2** The DPP should encourage the District Commander to use the information contained in the Consultation Report when developing the Local Policing Plan.
- 3.3** The Policing Board will also consider the information obtained from this exercise when setting objectives for policing. These objectives are published in the Annual Policing Plan.
- 3.4** In order for the public consultation to be effective the DPP should consider the following:
- a) undertaking a public consultation survey every second year, this survey while being specific to each council area should also serve to inform the Policing Board of issues across Northern Ireland and be used to assess public satisfaction with the effectiveness of the DPP;
 - b) holding a number of public meetings or general forums for discussion each year to enable people to present their views on the policing of the district. These meetings would be specifically to gather information for use in the planning process. The DPP should make the public aware when advertising these events, that they are public meetings and should encourage the public to attend and to participate in discussion with the local police and the DPP members:
 - i) holding meetings in different parts of the council area to ensure that all residents have easy access to these events.

- ii) holding meetings at different time to allow for different working patterns and domestic commitments.
- c) encouraging the public to submit their views concerning the policing of the district in writing to the DPP;
- d) the use of other qualitative consultation methods to obtain the views of those groups who are hard to reach.

3.5 Obtaining the views of the public on matters concerning the policing of the district is an important part of the work of a DPP. The report summarising the findings of the annual consultation exercise will be a significant document providing information of interest to a wide audience and the DPP should ensure that this report reaches a wide and diverse audience. The information generated by the DPP through consultation should be used to identify the key issues concerning the policing of the district that the public would like to see addressed.

3.6 To assist in prioritising these issues for inclusion in the Consultation Report the DPP should consider the scale of problem and the impact that it is making at a local level.

4. Identifying Local Priorities for Inclusion in the Local Policing Plan

4.1 Having conducted their consultation with the local community, the DPP has a responsibility to ensure that the views of the local community as identified through this consultation are discussed with the District Commander. In doing this the DPP is providing the District Commander with information to ensure that a local policing plan is developed which reflects the concerns and priorities of the local community.

4.2 In order to achieve this, the DPP should undertake the following actions:

- Conduct their consultation exercise
- Summarise this into an annual consultation report
- Prioritise the issues from the local community
- Discuss these issues with the District Commander
- Agree targets with the District Commander for inclusion in the local policing plan
- Inform community of the outcome of this exercise and of the extent to which issues identified through consultation have been incorporated into the local policing plan.

The Board has issued guidance setting out how this process should be implemented.

5. Monitoring Police Performance

- 5.1** The DPP has an important role in monitoring the performance of the local police to ensure that they are achieving the targets set within the Local Policing Plan. The DPP monitors the performance of the police by analysing performance reports and asking the District Commander questions at meetings in public. These meetings are to be conducted in an open and transparent manner. Members of the public should be encouraged to attend and participate in these meetings.
- 5.2** The DPP should hold a minimum of four - quarterly - meetings in public each year. The DPP should discuss the timing of the meetings with the District Commander in order to align the DPP's meetings to accommodate the PSNI's reporting and planning cycle.
- 5.3** Meetings should be arranged in a manner that maximises the opportunity for all sections of the community to attend, particularly hard to reach groups. The DPP should recognise the importance of a neutral venue and the need to ensure the safety of all those attending the meeting. The DPP should also consider arranging meetings in public in different venues and locations throughout the district.
- 5.4** At least 21 working days before a meeting in public, the District Commander should be informed in writing of the date, place, time and nature of the meeting. The DPP should also ask for a copy of the District Commander's Report to be sent to the DPP 15 working days in advance of the meeting to allow time for it to be distributed to DPP Members so that they can prepare for the meeting.
- 5.5** The District Commander's Report should include the following information:
- a.** a summary of recorded crime and detection rates within the District;

- b. progress against each of the areas in the local policing plan and the annual policing plan as it relates to the district;
- c. an update on specific issues relative to policing the district that may have aroused the public's interest or concern;
- d. a summary of those operational issues that have given rise to the deployment of significant police resources or have aroused substantial media coverage.

5.6 The DPP should advertise meetings in public at least 12 working days in advance of the meeting. All advertisements should outline the purpose of the meeting, the date, place and time and that the public may ask questions of the police through the Chairman of the DPP.

5.7 Members of the public may raise their question at a meeting of the DPP or submit a written question for the DPP to put to the District Commander on their behalf.

5.8 Members of the public should be informed that written questions will generally receive a more detailed answer than a question submitted at a meeting. Anonymous written questions submitted will not be considered.

5.9 The District Commander should be informed of written questions submitted by the public - where the police would be expected to provide an answer - eight working days before the meeting in public.

5.10 The District Commander should also be informed eight working days before the meeting in public of any questions that DPP Members will raise in response to the Commander's Report. When the DPP submits written questions in advance to the District Commander the intent is to allow the District Commander time to provide a detailed answer at the meeting in public. It is not intended to prevent a DPP Member asking the District Commander questions at the meeting in public.

5.11 In advance of its first meeting in public the DPP should agree a process for dealing with questions from the public in both written and oral format. Such a process should allow engagement from the public but be consistent with the constructive and orderly conduct of meetings.

5.12 In responding to a question, the presumption is that information should be provided unless there are legal reasons for withholding the information or if it is in the public interest to hold it back. At the start of a meeting in public of the DPP, the public should be informed of the circumstances in which information cannot be provided, for example if:

- a) it is in the interests of national security
- b) it would endanger the security of one or more individuals
- c) it relates to an individual and is of a sensitive personal nature
- d) it involves information that the police are holding in confidence from another agency
- e) it would, or would be likely to, prejudice proceedings which have been commenced in a court of law
- f) it would, or would be likely to, prejudice the prevention or detection of crime or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders.

This information should be provided on an information sheet and given out at the start of the meeting.

5.13 Not all questions have to be dealt with at the meeting in public and some questions may receive a written response. In addition .not every question need be answered on an individual basis. If multiple questions are received on the same issue it is appropriate to provide one composite answer dealing with the issue.

5.14 Information cannot be provided, the Chairman should encourage the

questioner to rephrase and/or generalise the question in order to create an opportunity for information to be provided.

- 5.15** At the beginning of the meeting the public should be informed by the DPP Chairman that they will have the opportunity to put questions, through the Chairman, to the District Commander.

- 5.16** It is the Chairman's responsibility to ensure that the meeting is managed in accordance with the DPP's standing orders and that participation by DPP Members or by the public is managed in a way that achieves the publicised purpose of the meeting.

- 5.17** In doing this the Chairman is responsible to maintain a neutral and constructive environment within the meeting. To achieve this the Chairman should conduct the meeting in a way that encourages positive engagement from all those attending and makes them feel welcome.

- 5.18** The Chairman should also ensure that those attending – DPP Members, the District Commander and PSNI staff and members of the public are not subjected to inappropriate challenge. Inappropriate challenge includes repeated questioning on a subject to which a response has already been given, verbal abuse such as name calling or challenging an individual's integrity by disputing the truthfulness of the answer provided.

- 5.19** Questions submitted and answers provided form part of the official records of the DPP and as such should be kept in an appropriate fashion.

- 5.20** In addition to reports presented to meetings in public, the DPP may ask the District Commander to brief them on other policing issues relating to the district. The DPP should hold these briefings in public to reach as wide and diverse an audience as possible, unless there is a specific reason not to.

Monitoring police performance over a six month period

5.21 DPP members should question the police District Commander on specific aspects of police performance against the Local Policing Plan and the Annual Policing Plan as it relates to the district - when reporting on the six month periods ending 31st March and 30th September respectively. The District Commander should also be asked to supply the DPP with the following information at these meetings:

- a) progress towards developing 'policing with the community' as the core function of all police within the district;
- b) the contribution that the police are making to any community safety projects within the district;
- c) achievement of targets set out in the local policing plan and in the annual policing plan as it relates to the district;
- d) achievement of targets relative to crime prevention in the district.

5.22 In addition to the meeting in public at which it monitors police performance the DPP may meet in private. Such meetings would allow the DPP to plan its business. The decision to meet in private will be at the discretion of the DPP.

6. Community Engagement - Gaining the Co-operation of the Public with the Police in Preventing Crime

6.1 Whilst section 16(c)(ii) of the Act states that the functions of a DPP shall be to:

make arrangements for obtaining the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime.

This should not be viewed in isolation. Ultimately everything a DPP will do contributes to gaining the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime. For example by consulting, the DPP creates a dialogue between the police and local community; by establishing policing priorities it gives the local community a say in policing and by monitoring it ensures local accountability. Each of these actions may assist in gaining the co-operation of the public. However, in addition to this the DPP should take specific steps to progress this objective. For example it may conduct PR and awareness raising activities to spread crime prevention messages, it may develop forums for local people and agencies to address particular community problems in conjunction with the police and it may educate the public about how the police are doing their job.

6.2 The outcome for the DPP in undertaking this role will ultimately be to see the public and the police working together on specific issues to prevent crime. As such, it is also important that the DPP interact with and encourage the involvement of other agencies who can contribute to achieving this aim, for example:- the Community Safety Partnership; community and police liaison groups; community groups; statutory agencies and other Council departments.

6.3 In fulfilling this role the DPP will develop their Strategic Plan and Operational Plan under this heading to ensure that the community's priorities and issues concerning policing within the district are recognised. Equally it will have identified the opportunities for the public and the police to work together to address specific issues. For example, if the police have identified that

domestic burglary is a significant problem within the district the DPP should consider what measures they could take to assist the community to work with the police to reduce domestic burglary.

- 6.4** Engaging with the community to gain the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime can take many shapes and forms. It can involve simple exercises in consultation to clarify and confirm issues through to the formation of multi-agency partnerships with community representation at the centre to address and resolve specific crime related issues.
- 6.5** At the heart of this approach is the role of the DPP in encouraging the community to get involved with the police in planning how specific crime related problems will be resolved. In doing this the DPP will be identifying the issues, raising awareness as to the opportunities to address those issues in conjunction with the police, encouraging the community to get involved with the police and publicising the good news stories where this approach has worked.
- 6.6** Taking account of the DPP's statutory duty to represent the views of the public, and to obtain the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime, the DPP has a strategic role in relation to crime prevention within the district. In order to develop this important role the DPP should consider delegating its responsibility under paragraph 16 (1)(c)(ii) of the Act, which requires the DPP to

make arrangements for obtaining the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime;

to a committee of the DPP as provided for at Schedule 3 section 15(1)(a)(b), of the Act. The Policing Board has produced a Guidance Note setting out how this structure may work if it were to be adopted and implemented by a DPP.

7. The DPP Creating a General Forum for Discussion

- 7.1** The DPP should facilitate two general forums specifically dedicated to discussion of policing issues in the district each year.
- 7.2** The purpose of the DPP creating a general forum for discussion is to enable people to present their views on the policing of the district and to engage in discussion with the District Commander or with the DPP Members. It also enables the DPP to gather information for the police planning process, to engage the public with the police, to link into consultation with other local partnerships and agencies and identify and to disseminate good practice in terms of community crime prevention activities. DPPs should organise public meetings in areas where the community may have difficulty in engaging with the police directly.
- 7.3** Such forums should be part of the DPP's approach to community engagement designed to assist the DPP in gaining the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime. In doing this the DPP is also demonstrating openness and transparency through acting as a general forum for discussion and consultation on matters relating to the policing of the district.
- 7.4** This discussion forum should be attended by the DPP and by the District Commander and chaired by the DPP chairman. The primary purpose of each of these two forums is for the public to engage with the police and with the DPP in discussing issues of concern in relation to policing in the district.
- 7.5** The DPP should publicise in advance the general theme or issues that will be subject to discussion. The DPP should invite representatives from organisations known to have an interest in the subject.
- 7.6** The theme for the meeting may be an issue of concern within the district at the time of the meeting or it may be one of the key areas taken from the Local Policing Plan. If the meeting is themed in such a way the District Commander

should be notified of this at least 15 working days in advance and asked to open the meeting by briefing the DPP and the public on the current situation in relation to the issue under consideration.

- 7.7** Following the District Commander's briefing the DPP Chairman should open the forum to the public and invite them to raise issues through the chair to the District Commander or to the DPP.

8. Administration of the DPP

Standing Orders

8.1 The procedures of the DPP should be organised in accordance with section 19 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and Schedule 3 paragraph 12 (4) to the Act. In order to achieve this, the DPP should draw up standing orders setting out how its business shall be regulated.

8.2 Standing Orders produced by the DPP should include the following:

- a) the quorum for a meeting of a DPP shall be 5
- b) every question at a meeting in public of a DPP shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present and voting on the question and, in the case of an equal division of votes the chairman of the meeting shall have a second or casting vote
- c) if the chairman and vice chairman are absent from a meeting, those members present shall elect one of their members to act as chairman of the meeting.

Appendix 1 details other issues that may be included in standing orders.

8.3 Before the first meeting in public of a DPP, the council should send the Policing Board and the District Commander for the district, within which the DPP exists, a copy of the standing orders that will apply to the DPP. The DPP should seek approval from the Board to amend standing orders. Subsequent amendments to standing orders should be sent to the Policing Board and the District Commander.

8.4 The standing orders relating to the DPP should be readily available at all council offices for consultation and reference by all members of the DPP, members of the council, council staff and members of the public.

Administrative Responsibilities

8.5 In fulfilling the statutory duties, the DPP is required to ensure that appropriate administrative arrangements are made as follows:

- a) the specified number and type of meetings are held each business year;
- b) the arrangements for the DPP meeting in public are in line with guidance contained in this Code;
- c) DPP meetings in public are advertised in line with guidance contained in this Code;
- d) appropriate arrangements are in place for notifying the District Commander of the date and purpose of a meeting of the DPP;
- e) the District Commander reports on police performance to the DPP;
- f) the council and the Policing Board are notified as to how the DPP is discharging its duties under the requirements of the legislation and Code of Practice;
- g) appropriate arrangements are in place to provide for financial accountability.

Business Planning

8.6 In organising and planning their own business the DPP should adopt a standard business planning model whereby they produce a Strategic Plan covering the four year period during which they hold office. This plan has already been referred to at section 2.6 above

8.7 The Strategic Plan should be supported by an Operational Plan as detailed at section 2.7 above for each of the five key areas as detailed at 2.5 above.

Reporting on the work of the DPP
Reports of Meetings in Public

8.8 The report from a DPP Meeting in Public should include the following:

- I. the agenda for the meeting
- II. the minutes of the meeting to include a record of all questions and the answer given
- III. a copy of the police District Commander's report
- IV. a summary of decisions taken and the outcomes from the meeting.

8.9 This report should be a functional document with the emphasis on providing a record of the proceedings of the DPP and making that information available to the public.

8.10 Before the report of a DPP meeting in public (in which the police have participated) is ratified, the District Commander should be asked to confirm within 5 working days, the factual accuracy of any PSNI input.

8.11 Not later than 10 working days after the report of the meeting in public of a DPP has been formally ratified, a copy should be sent for information to the council, the Policing Board and to the District Commander for the district in which the meeting took place.

8.12 All DPP reports produced after meetings in public should be readily available at all council offices for consultation and reference by members of the council, council staff and the public. The report should be made available through the DPP website at www.districtpolicing.com.

- 8.13** Copies of reports should also be available on request in accessible formats such as Braille, large print, disc and audio cassette, other languages, and to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English.

Report on the DPP's Continuous Assessment of Police Performance

- 8.14** On a six monthly basis and following the meeting detailed at 5.19 above the DPP should produce a report setting out their assessment of the police performance in relation to the issues detailed in this section. These reports should cover the period April to September and September to April in order that the DPP report may be aligned with the police reporting cycle.

The DPP Annual Report

- 8.15** Section 17 (1) and (2) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 as amended by paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2003 states:

(a) A district policing partnership shall, not later than 3 months after the end of each financial year, submit to the district council a general report on the exercise of its functions during that year.

(b) When a district policing partnership submits its report under subsection (1), it shall at the same time send a copy of the report to the Board.

- 8.16** In particular the Annual Report should summarise how the DPP has made provision for achieving its objectives in relation to the five key areas set out at 2.5 above.
- 8.17** The DPP Annual Report should include details of expenditure as detailed in the DPP Financial Guidelines.
- 8.18** A copy of the audit certificate issued by the Local Government Auditor should be included with the Annual Report. In the event of an audit certificate not being received in time for inclusion in the Annual Report, the report

should be issued without the audit certificate and clearly state that the accounts are un audited

- 8.19** Before issuing the Annual Report the DPP shall consult with the District Commander. The report should record that this consultation has taken place and summarise the outcomes.
- 8.20** The DPP Annual Report should be readily available at all council offices for consultation and reference by members of the council, council staff and the public. Copies should be made available through the DPP website at www.districtpolicing.com.
- 8.21** The DPP should publicly advertise in a way that reaches the whole community stating that the Annual Report has been published and where copies are available. The public should also be informed that a copy of the Annual Report may be obtained from the council offices or by writing to the DPP and requesting a copy.

Strategic Plan and Operational Plan

- 8.22** The DPP should produce a Strategic Plan supported by an Operational Plan as detailed at 2.6 and 2.7 above.

Consultation Report

- 8.23** The DPP should produce a report on the outcome of the public consultation exercise, this report should also incorporate issues raised at the general forum which the DPP may have held. The consultation Report should identify the DPP's policing priorities for the district. This report should be produced on an annual basis and should be discussed with the District Commander in sufficient time to enable the District Commander to take account of the issues raised when developing the Local Policing Plan.

Special Reports

- 8.24** Under section 18 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act as amended by paragraph 3 of Schedule 1 to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2003) the Board may require a DPP to provide it with a report, within the period of three months from the date on which that requirement is made, on any matter that it may specify connected with the exercise of the DPP's functions. Such a request may arise from a perceived failure by the DPP to fulfil its statutory obligations. It may equally be to clarify how the DPP proposes to respond to specific issues that have arisen within the district.
- 8.25** Copies of all Reports produced by the DPP should also be available on request in accessible formats such as Braille, large print, disc and audio cassette, and in other languages to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English.

Financial Arrangements

- 8.26** Paragraph 11 of Schedule 3 to the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 states:

“The Board shall for each financial year make to the council a grant equal to three-quarters of the expenses reasonably incurred by the council in that year in connection with the establishment of, or the exercise of functions by, a DPP”.

Full details of the conditions attached to the financial grant, which the Policing Board makes to councils in relation to the reasonable costs of DPPs, are contained in a separate document complementing this Code of Practice and entitled Financial Guidelines for DPPs

Contact point

If you need further information or would like additional copies of this Code, please contact:

Northern Ireland Policing Board
Community Affairs Branch
Waterside Tower
31 Clarendon Road
Clarendon Dock
BELFAST BT1 3BG

Phone: 02890 408550

email: information@nipolicingboard.org.uk

website: www.nipolicingboard.org.uk or www.districtpolicing.com

Copies of this Code of Practice are available on request in accessible formats such as Braille, large print, disc and audio cassette, other languages and to meet the needs of those whose first language is not English.

Issues that should be included in DPP Standing Orders

1. Questions

1.1 In relation to meetings in public of the DPP, members of the public should be informed that:

- a) they may, through the Chairman of the DPP, put a question to the District Commander,
- b) written questions should be submitted in advance of the meeting and may be submitted in person at the meeting
- c) a question submitted at the start of a meeting is unlikely to receive a detailed response on that occasion and may be carried over to a future meeting
- d) not all questions have to be dealt with at the meeting in public and some questions may receive a written response.
- e) not every question need be answered on an individual basis, if multiple questions are received on the same issue it is appropriate to provide one composite answer dealing with the issue.
- f) anonymous questions will not be responded to.

1.2 All correspondence, including written questions, should be addressed to:

the Manager of the DPP,
at the address of the council offices

- 1.3** All written questions should be acknowledged within 5 working days of receipt. The response should indicate when a substantive response may be expected.

2. *Conduct*

- 2.1** The DPP should hold its meetings in a neutral venue and in an environment that is free from intimidation. In this context it is the responsibility of the Chairman to ensure that the DPP does not acquiesce in behaviour which is either offensive or intimidatory. Intimidatory behaviour includes chanting, singing, name calling, interruptions to the business of the DPP from the audience or the display of flags or emblems.

- 2.2** The chairman of the DPP, or a member of the DPP in the role of chairman, may order the removal from the meeting of any person whose behaviour represents a threat to the orderly conduct of the meeting.

3. *DPP Annual Report*

- 3.1** In addition to the council and the Policing Board a copy of the DPP Annual Report should be sent to:

- a) the police District Commander,
- b) chairpersons of community and consultative groups based within the council area,
- c) elected representatives for the area,
- d) chief executives or district managers of public bodies responsible for the delivery of services within the council area,

- e) chief executives or managers of voluntary organisations operating within the council area whose remit involves:
 - i. working with the police
 - ii. crime prevention
 - iii. community safety

- f) principals and chairpersons of the board of governors for schools located within the council area,

- g) secretaries of chambers of commerce within the council area,

- h) copies should also be available for consultation by the public in:
 - i. libraires
 - ii. community centres
 - iii. leisure centres

- i) editors of local newspapers that circulate in the council area.

Arrangements for the Belfast District Policing Partnership and sub-groups

1. Purpose

1.1 This appendix covers arrangements made under section 21 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000, for sub groups of the Belfast DPP to be established in the council area. Section 21 states:

- (1) The District Council for Belfast shall establish a sub-group from within its District Policing Partnership for each police district established under section 20(2).
- (2) The function of each sub-group shall be to provide views to the police District Commander of the sub-group's police district and to the District Policing Partnership on any matter concerning the policing of that police district.
- (3) Each sub-group shall consist of at least six members of the partnership.
- (4) The members of a sub-group shall be appointed by the partnership.
- (5) The members of a sub-group shall appoint a member to act as Chairman of the sub-group.
- (6) If they are unable to agree on whom to appoint as chairman, the partnership shall appoint the chairman.

2. *Number of sub-groups*

- 2.1 The Belfast DPP should establish four sub-groups for the council area. One group should be established for each of the police District Command Units, - North, South, East and West Belfast.

3. *Membership*

- 3.1 Section 21 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 states that each sub group shall consist of a minimum of six members drawn from the DPP. As far as is possible membership of the sub-group should reflect the balance of parties represented on the DPP and the balance between elected members and independent members.
- 3.2 The DPP should nominate members to each of the sub-groups.

4. *Conduct of meetings and procedures*

- 4.1 Each sub-group will be bound by standing orders established by the Belfast DPP.

5. *Meetings in Public*

- 5.1 The function of a sub-group is to provide views to the police District Commander and to the DPP on any matter concerning the policing of the district for which they have been established. In order to fulfil this function each sub-group should hold meetings in public at least once every three months. It will be at the discretion of the DPP to decide in what months the sub-groups will meet. However, in order to carry out the business of the DPP, it may be necessary to meet more frequently than this.

- 5.2** Each sub-group should, where possible, hold its meetings in public within the boundary of the police district for which they have been established.
- 5.3** When arranging a meeting in public the chairman of the sub-group should ensure that it is arranged at a time and place to maximise the opportunity for everybody in the community to attend. In doing this the importance of a neutral venue and the need to ensure the safety of all those attending the meeting should be recognised. The sub group should also consider rotating meetings across different venues and locations throughout the area their sub group is responsible for.
- 5.4** It will be the responsibility of the Belfast DPP to monitor the performance of the police as specified in section 16 of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.
- 5.5** Arrangements for meetings in public of the sub-group should follow the guidelines for meetings of the DPP as set out in section 5 of this Code.
- 5.6** Written questions relating to the sub-group area should be addressed to:
the DPP,
at the address of the council offices
The chairman of the DPP should make arrangements for questions to be distributed to the relevant sub-group for a response.

6. *Reports provided by the sub-groups*

- 6.1** Not later than 10 working days after the report of the meeting in public of a sub-group of a DPP has been formally ratified, a copy should be sent to the council, for information, the Policing Board and the police District Commander for the district in which the meeting took place.

6.2 The report from a sub-group should include the following:

- a) the agenda for the meeting
- b) the minutes of the meeting to include a record of all questions submitted or asked
- c) action sheet showing key issues that have been identified to be raised with the entire Belfast DPP.

6.3 This report should be a concise functional document with the emphasis on providing a record of the proceedings of the sub-group.

7. *Overview by the Belfast DPP*

7.1 In order that the Belfast DPP may discharge its responsibilities for the whole of Belfast, each of the four District Commanders should be asked to present a report to each meeting in public of the DPP. The DPP should ask for information as set out in section 5.20 of this Code.

7.2 The DPP should consider these reports at a meeting in public to which the District Commanders are invited to present their report and answer questions.

Arrangements for these meetings should follow the guidelines for meetings as set out in section 5 of this Code.

7.3 Once every three months, as part of their responsibility to monitor the performance of the police, the Belfast DPP should ask each of the four Belfast District Commanders for a written report on the policing of their area. The DPP should ask for information that will enable them to assess police performance as set out in section 5 of this Code.

7.4 Not later than 10 working days after the report of the meeting of the DPP has been formally ratified, a copy should be sent for information to the council, the Policing Board and to each of the four District Commanders with responsibility for Belfast. However, the District Commander should be asked to confirm the factual accuracy of any PSNI input before the report is ratified.

7.5 The report from the Belfast DPP should include the following:

- a) the agenda for the meeting
- b) the minutes of the meeting to include a record of all questions submitted or asked and the answer given
- c) copies of the District Commanders' reports
- d) action sheet showing key issues that have been identified and action against the four local Policing Plans.

7.6 The DPP should undertake an annual public consultation exercise within each of the four Belfast police district areas. The DPP should forward a copy of the outcomes from this exercise to each of the four District Commanders with responsibility for Belfast. The DPP should invite each District Commander to consult with the sub-group for their district in order to develop a local policing plan. In undertaking this role the DPP should follow the guidelines at section 3 of this Code.