

**MINUTES OF THE DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP PUBLIC MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 14 APRIL 2008 AT 7.30PM
IN THE COUNCIL OFFICES, 50 BALLYRONAN ROAD, MAGHERAFELT**

PRESENT Cllr S McPeake, Chairman
Mrs Y Hodgkinson, Vice-Chairperson
Cllr P McLean
Cllr K Lagan
Cllr S Kerr
Cllr G Shiels
Cllr P Bateson
Cllr E A Forde
Cllr I Milne
Mr S Davey
Mrs C Patterson
Mrs M McGurk
Mr K Molloy
Mrs C Elattar
Mr D Seffen

Also present Chief Inspector P Douglas
Inspector B Blemmings
Inspector H Johnston
Chief Inspector Steven Reid
Mr J A McLaughlin, Chief Executive MDC
Mr M McCrory, DPP Manager
Ms P Shaw, Secretary

1 Welcome

The Chairman, Cllr McPeake, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and especially the new Independent Members. He thanked Cllr Lagan for carrying out her role as Chairperson very efficiently and he also thanked all the outgoing Independent Members.

Cllr Lagan thanked everyone for their input over her term and commitment they showed. She would especially like to thank Patricia Shaw and Michael McCrory for assisting her in her Chairmanship.

2 Apologies

Cllr J Campbell.

3 Declarations of Interest

No member had any interest to declare.

4 Confirmation of Minutes

PROPOSED by Cllr S Kerr,
Seconded by Cllr I Milne, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting.

5 Matters Arising

Cllr Kerr stated that he had read the replies from the PSNI but had not seen the letter sent from the DPP regarding Tasers. Mr Michael McCrory distributed copies of the letter.

6 Report by the District Commander

Chief Inspector Paul Douglas introduced the members to Chief Inspector Steven Reid as his replacement as he would be leaving to be Superintendent for Community Safety in G District. He thanked everyone for the time he spent here.

He then presented the twelve month report to the District Policing Partnership for the period April 2007 - March 2008. He highlighted that the most significant features were:

- To reduce the number of recorded crimes of criminal damage by 2% - this was not on target.

He highlighted a number of initiatives that had been ongoing to help combat criminal damage, amongst these were the Under 18 scheme and Operation School Watch.

Cllr Bateson asked how many school were part of Operation School Watch to which Chief Inspector Douglas replied all in Magherafelt town.

- To increase the number of arrests for drugs offences - this was on target.

Cllr McPeake asked about if you are arrested for drugs what actions were open to the police.

Chief Inspector Douglas said that for procession it would go to the courts but for a minor amount normally a caution.

- To maintain current detection level for careless and dangerous driving - this was not on target.

Chief Inspector Douglas stated that there had been five fatal road accidents this year which was a decrease from previous years.

Cllr Kerr stated that public perception is that careless driving is on the increase with boy racers and exhibition driving.

Chief Inspector Douglas stated that they had a number of operations in place including educating young driver, motor madness as well a regular enforcement.

- On Street drinking.

Chief Inspector Douglas reported that the recent detections had not been prosecuted by the courts.

Cllr Bateson proposed that the statutory bodies recognise the role of Community Groups especially the new one between Sperrin and Leckagh, this was seconded by Cllr Kerr.

Cllr McPeake stated that Community Groups needed support and help from statutory bodies, DPP and the PSNI.

- Summary of recorded crime and clearance rates

Chief Inspector Douglas reported a reduction of total crime of 3.7%.

He also reported a downward trend of violent crime and thefts were also down 11.6%.

Cllr Bateson asked about when the assaults took place to which Chief Inspector Douglas replied that the bulk occurred at the weekend and they had put on extra patrols.

Cllr Kerr expressed concerns at this years clearance rate compared with last years.

Chief Inspector Douglas replied that there was a change in recording clearance rates which would account for this and that next year figures would be like for like with this years figures.

Cllr Milne asked about vandalism to Council property.

Chief Inspector Douglas said they had proactive controls at the weekend and they were keen to bring people before the courts.

Cllr Shiels asked about the unsolved murders over the last 40 years, he included his brother's in that. He asked what was the status of these because the Chief Constable has recently stated that these investigations were a waste of money.

Chief Inspector Douglas stated that he could not comment of these ongoing investigations at the current time.

Mrs C Patterson asked were dwindling police resources affecting clearance rates.

Chief Inspector Douglas replied that he had no control over budgets or recruitment but that he would make best use of his existing resources.

Cllr Lagan stated that it was the low level of crime such as antisocial behaviour that really frustrated local people especially those that live in estates. She said that people were scared to speak out as this would only attract more trouble for them.

Inspector Johnston stated that the police needed intelligence and needed the people to speak out in order to prosecute offenders and reduce this problem.

Mrs C Patterson stated that it was hard getting through on the telephone and this was very frustrating.

Chief Inspector Douglas stated that his officers would give out mobile numbers to local representatives to help facilitate communication and he advised people to contact them using the new number for non emergency of 0845 6008000.

Cllr Milne and McLean also stated they had problems getting through.

Cllr Milne highlighted that people from Bellaghy had reported theft of heating oil to him.

PSNI took note of this.

Mrs C Patterson asked if the PSNI visited premises to check for underage drinking.

Inspector Blemmings said they do have unannounced visits and premises have a duty of care when underage drinkers have been dropped off.

Cllr McLean stated that the NEELB had held an event in the Bridewell regarding underage drinking and this was not well attended at all.

Cllr Kerr asked would it be possible for a break down of child on child and adult on child.

Inspector Johnston said that he would look into it.

Cllr Milne stated that there had been recent case of a child being escorted off and St Pius X School bus in hand cuffs.

Inspector Blemmings stated that officers were well trained in arresting and detaining people and used appropriate measures as necessary. He offered to discuss this later with the Cllr.

Cllr Forde asked about damage to Council property and what can be done about it.

Inspector Johnston said that they had patrols targeting areas such as toilets to help combat this.

Cllr McLean asked what the number of vandalism to Council property.

Mr J McLaughlin stated that it would be twelve in an average month.

Inspector Blemmings stated that a recent offender had been arrested and charged for vandalism to the public toilets on Rainey Street.

7 Questions from the Public

A letter had been received from Desertmartin Community Group regarding getting through to the PSNI by phone and also the accident on the Main Street, Desertmartin.

Chief Inspector Douglas replied that Inspector Johnston was looking to the problem with the switchboard and advised everyone to use the new number which is 0845 6008000.

With regard to the accidents Inspector Blemmings stated that the recent one had happened early in the morning. Mr Best from Desertmartin Community Group stated that there is at least on accident every year mainly between the hours of 4.30am and 6.00am with regard to lorries.

Cllr Kerr suggested that an on-site meeting with DRD Roads, Councillors and Desertmartin Community Group. This is to be arranged.

A letter was received from the Queens Avenue Residents Group asking about a number of issues such as vandalism, antisocial behaviour, patrols and speeding cars.

Cllr McLean stated that he thought most of the trouble came from people who didn't live in that area and asked that the Community Group take steps to deter these people.

Chief Inspector Douglas stated that the PSNI had learned lessons from last year and would put measures in place. Members of the Community Group asked could the BEBO website which encouraged rioting be closed down by the police.

Inspector Blemmings stated that they did no have the power to do this but they were putting in reports to headquarters.

It was raised about drug dealers getting short sentences and being back in the community. It was also raised that suspected drug dealers who had been evicted from the community were being put on the priority list of the Housing Executive and then setting up shop in their new estate. It was agreed by the DPP that a statement be made to the media that this practice should be investigated were undesirables were given preference over local residents in housing.

The PSNI agreed to take on board the other comments in the letter and to work with the Community Group.

Cllr Milne asked about the PSNI station in Bellaghy.

Chief Inspector Douglas replied that this would be closing aget public consultation.

Cllr Milne raised the issue about the taxi scam in Maghera.

Inspector Blemmings was not aware of the specifics but would talk to the Cllr later.

8 Operational Plan

Mr Michael McCrory presented the Operational Plan to the DPP. After discussion the DPP agreed to adopt the plan.

It was agreed that the draft annual report would be circulated for comments and then final agreement would be give by the Chairman due to the fact that there was no meeting in June.

9 Appointment of Vice-Chairperson

After an election Mrs Yvonne Hodgkinson was elected as Vice-Chairperson.

10 Any Other Business

Mr Michael McCrory stated that a training session facilitated by the PSNI would be taking place in June. This session would give members both old and new an opportunity to role play as officers managing resources in the district in response to need. This would equip them with a better knowledge of policing and resources.

Mr Michael McCrory stated that he would be sending out a training needs analyses to all members to develop training.

Cllr Bateson referred to Cllr Shiels' earlier comments and agreed that a mechanism for exploring truth in the past conflict should be explored and that the truth should be arrived at for all victims.

11 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the DPP should be held in Maghera Leisure Centre, Coleraine Road, Maghera on Monday 11 August 2008 at 7.30pm.

The meeting concluded at 10.20pm.

J A McLaughlin

The foregoing Minutes are hereby Confirmed.

_____ (Chairman)

_____ (Date)