

**MINUTES OF THE DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP PUBLIC MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 28 JANUARY 2008 AT 7.30PM
IN MAGHERA LEISURE CENTRE, COLERAINE ROAD, MAGHERA**

PRESENT Mr J Conlon, Vice-Chairperson
Cllr P McLean
Cllr S McPeake
Mrs M Donnelly
Cllr S Kerr
Cllr J Campbell
Mrs Sue Chada
Cllr G Shiels
Dr Shortall
Mrs M McCormack
Mr J O'Doherty
Cllr E A Forde
Cllr I Milne

Also present Inspector B Blemmings
Inspector H Johnston
Natalie Whelehen, Children's Law Centre
Debbie Donnelly, Deputy Chief Executive, NIPB
Mr J A McLaughlin, Chief Executive MDC
Mr M McCrory, DPP Manager
Ms P Shaw, Secretary

1 Welcome

The Vice-Chairperson, Mr John Conlon, welcomed everyone to the meeting, and especially Natalie Whelehen from the Children's Law Centre. He also welcomed Debbie Donnelly, Deputy Chief Executive of Northern Ireland Policing Board.

2 Apologies

Cllr K Lagan, Chairperson, Ms F Symington, Cllr P Bateson and Mrs B Foster.

3 Declarations of Interest

No member had any interest to declare.

4 Confirmation of Minutes

PROPOSED by Cllr S Kerr,
Seconded by Mr J O'Doherty, and

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

5 Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

6 Presentation on Tasers from Children's Law Centre

Natalie Whelehen from the Children's Law Centre gave a presentation on Tasers (see Appendix 1)

Questions

Cllr McPeake stated that the presentation was eye opening in the way the PSNI appear to have overridden the Equality Consultation set out by the Northern Ireland Policing Board. He also stated that the PSNI appeared to have adopted tasers too quickly and that the DPP needs to send out a message.

Cllr McLean thanked Natalie for her presentation. He stated that he would like to see a comparison of the use of tasers versus live weapons as regards to death as it appears to him that tasers would be less lethal than fire arms.

Cllr Kerr questioned the due process of adopting the tasers and asked that the DPP send a clear message to the Chief Constable with regard to this.

Natalie Whelehen stated that the equality impact assessment on tasers is due in April 2008.

Mrs M Donnelly said that she now questioned the role of the policing board as it appears the PSNI accountability to them has been shredded.

Dr Shortall stated that the impact of 50,000 volts would not be good for the heart or pacemakers.

Cllr McLean stated that he would like to hear the Policing Board and the PSNI's opinion on the adoption of tasers.

It was proposed that a letter be sent to the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Chief Constable stating Magherafelt DPP's concern over the way the PSNI adopted tasers (see Appendix II). The DPP would also like to invite the PSNI to give a presentation on the reasons for the adoption of tasers.

This was carried by a vote of 8 to 3.

7 Report by the District Commander

Inspector Harry Johnston presented the nine month report on behalf of Chief Inspector Douglas who sent his apologies to the District Policing Partnership for the period April 2007 – December 2007. He highlighted that the most significant features were:

- To reduce the number of recorded crimes of criminal damage by 2% - this was on target.

- To increase the number of arrests for drugs offences - this was on target.
- To maintain current detection level for careless and dangerous driving - this was not on target.

Inspector Johnston stated that the use of mobile phones while driving has now been classified as careless driving.

Cllr McLean asked about tackling the problem with skateboarders and what has been done about it.

Mr M McCrory stated that he and the PSNI had met with a local shop owner to try and address the needs of skateboarders. Unfortunately the insurance cost for developing any skateboarding activities or an area for them to use was prohibitive to develop. The Council previously had a skateboard park which had to close due to the high cost of claims and insurance. It is hoped that the Community Safety Partnership can develop other youth diversion activities to help reduce the complaints of antisocial behaviour.

Cllr Kerr stated that skateboarding is not a crime and that should not be the message we are sending out.

Cllr Milne asked about statistics on increase of drugs in the district.

Inspector Blemmings said very difficult to say as we don't have a large drug problem to base this on.

Inspector Johnston stated that total crime was down 8.3% in the district.

Inspector Johnston explained the definition of sanctioned and non-sanctioned clearance rates.

Dr Shortall stated that we should count ourselves lucky because we have a low crime rate in the district.

Cllr McLean said that he would like to point out how well vintners worked with the PSNI and the Council/Community Safety schemes compared with a number of years ago.

Inspector Blemmings highlighted the work currently being done by the PSNI in conjunction with other agencies with regard to policing in the community as contained in report.

Cllr Kerr raised the issue of road safety on the Glenshane Road and the need for speed ramps on the Glen Road Maghera.

Inspector Blemmings stated that they had an education process for young drivers were local police met and talked with them.

Cllr Milne highlighted the problem with young drivers on the roundabout in Draperstown.

Inspector Johnston stated that there had been arrested for this.

Cllr Kerr asked would it be possible to get more details on the breakdown of crimes against children, i.e. child on child or adult on child.

8 Local Policing Plan

A local policing plan was agreed between the DPP and the PSNI.

9 Questions from the Public

There were no written questions from the public.

Cllr McPeake asked about flags and emblems and how the PSNI were dealing with this

Inspector Blemmings stated that partnership work with the community and other agencies was the key to dealing with flags and emblems as local agreement was the way forward.

Mrs M McCormack asked about the accident in Draperstown with the car in the river.

Inspector Johnston stated that this was a live investigation.

Cllr McLean stated that he had difficulty getting through to the police switchboard recently.

Inspector Johnston acknowledged this and said the situation was currently being looked at.

Cllr Kerr asked about accident figures for the Glen crossroads junction.

Inspector Blemmings said that he will send him these figures.

10 Any Other Business

Mr J O'Doherty stated that this was his last meeting and he wished everyone well.

Mr J Conlon wished Mr J O'Doherty well on his future endeavours.

11 Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting of the DPP should be held in The Rural College, Derrynoid Road, Draperstown on Monday 14 April 2008 at 7.30pm. **(However the location has now been changed to Magherafelt District Council).**

The meeting concluded at 10.20pm.

J A McLaughlin

The foregoing Minutes are hereby Confirmed.

_____ (Chairman)

_____ (Date)