

**MINUTES OF THE DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP PUBLIC MEETING
HELD ON MONDAY 2 FEBRUARY 2004 AT 8.15PM
IN MAGHERA LEISURE CENTRE, COLERAINE ROAD, MAGHERA**

PRESENT Cllr P McLean, Chairman
Cllr Miss K A Lagan, Vice-Chairperson
Mr J Conlon
Cllr R A Montgomery
Mrs M Donnelly
Cllr T J Catherwood
Mr J Campbell
Ms S Ewing
Miss A Scott
Cllr P McErlean
Cllr G Shiels
Ms F Symington
Cllr J A McBride
Dr D Shortall
Mrs M McCormack
Cllr J Junkin

Also present Mr J A McLaughlin, Chief Executive, MDC
Mr M McCrory, DPP Manager
Ms P Shaw, Secretary

1 Apologies

Cllr Rev Dr R T Wm McCrea, MLA.

2 Declarations of Interest

No member had any interest to declare.

3 Confirmation of Minutes

Ms Marion Donnelly requested that the issue she had raised regarding the pheasants causing both a nuisance and a danger on the Hillhead Road be included and also the fact that the police had stated that they would attempt to resolve this problem.

Dr Shortall clarified that he had only been querying the need for traffic lights outside St Patrick's College, Maghera

PROPOSED by Cllr Catherwood,
Seconded by Mrs M Donnelly, and

UNANIMOUSLY RESOLVED that subject to the foregoing amendments that the minutes were an accurate record of the meeting.

4 Matters Arising

No matter arising

5 Report by the District Commander

The District Commander Superintendent John Lindsay joined the meeting along with Inspector Harry Johnston, Inspector Stevie Martin and Patricia Roulston, the Police Analyst.

Superintendent Lindsay presented the report on the activities of the local DCU for the period November-December (Appendix I). This highlighted the following points:

- an increase in criminal damage over the same period last year,
- a decrease in offences against the person, and
- a decrease in the amount of theft.

Overall there were 157 crimes of this type in the November-December period this year compared to 197 in the same period last year.

It also highlighted the DCU's performance against policing plan targets, specifically:

- level of domestic burglaries - below target,
- level of vehicle crime - below target,
- level of drug seizures - above target,
- level violent crime detections (%) - below target,
- level of criminal damage - above target

In addition for the two months of November and December there had been:

- (a) 3 incidents of intimidation reported, with one arrest
- (b) 2 drugs finds, with 5 arrests
- (c) 56 arrests and/or interviews
- (d) 58 PACE searches
- (e) £185,000 of counterfeit clothing seized in Castledawson
- (f) 3 arrests for suspected Loyalist paramilitary activity
- (g) A conviction in relation to a fatal crash
- (h) 2 parades

Members Questions

(a) Mr J Conlon asked the Superintendent if it was the same individuals who were being arrested for drug pushing.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that this was not the case.

(b) Cllr Montgomery asked if there was any evident of paramilitary involvement in drug distribution within the district.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that he had no evidence of this.

(c) Ms F Symington asked for a definition of the scope of the term Criminal Damage.

In reply Mrs Patricia Roulston stated that it covered mainly a lot of minor crime. Typically it included many of the drink induced problems, such as teenagers going home from a bar of a Friday or Saturday night when they engaged in such activities as pulling plants from gardens emptying litter baskets removing road signs, writing graffiti, etc.

(d) Cllr K Lagan queried who was responsible if young people broke down fences. She cited the recent case of this in Brown Drive, Maghera and asked if the parents were responsible.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that the Community Safety Partnership had come forward with ideas to try and tackle this type of problem. These ideas included the provision of youth shelters where young people could gather to meet, rather than congregate in public areas and cause mischief. Inspector Harry Johnston stated that six juveniles had been interviewed regarding this specific matter but the police could not obtain proof against any one of them.

(e) Cllr Montgomery queried if any progress had been made in relation to finding the culprits who had broken down the young trees in Tobermore Main Street.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that no progress had been made.

(f) Ms F Symington sought figures on the level of “drink and driving” over the Christmas period.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that these were not yet available but that he would forward them. Inspector Johnston stated that he was aware that the level of detections were up on the previous year, as was the case with drugs.

(g) Cllr J Junkin sought clarification on how the police detected and dealt with “drugs and driving”, be they illegal or prescription drugs.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that this was a more difficult matter to deal with than “drink and driving”. In relation to detection, officers would notice such things as, slurred speech, erratic behaviour and/or the dilation of the pupils. With regard to evidence it was then necessary that a doctor would have to take a blood test in order to prove the case.

(h) Cllr Mc Erlean stated that in his report the Superintendent had said that in relation to drugs there had been two finds and three arrests. He (Cllr McErlean) was of the opinion that this was a very low level of detection and that surely the drug problem had been increasing.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that he disagreed because if the drug problem had been increasing then the level of crime such as burglary and theft would also have increased in order for people to finance their drugs habit. However his report had showed that both of these types of crime had actually decreased. In addition, intelligence indicated that there was only low key drug dealing taking place in this district.

(i) Cllr Montgomery raised the issue of the proposed phasing out of the Full Time Reserve. He stated that he understood that there were 55 Full Time Reserve Officers stationed within the Magherafelt DCU. He sought clarification as to how their duties would be covered. Cllr McBride stated that the DPP could exercise no influence as to whether the Full Time Reserve would be phased out. Any change to this policy would be decided by the Policing Board.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that he had to work within policing policy and guidelines. However, the public had to be reminded that the proposed new policing levels for Northern Ireland would mean that there would still be twice as many police per head of population compared to the UK. He felt however that the police would have to make more use of intelligence and of national initiatives, such as the national vehicle crime teams etc.

(j) Miss A Scott asked what progress had been made with regard to increased patrols in Castledawson. She reminded Superintendent Lindsay that it had been agreed with Superintendent Shevlin that a Community House for policing would be set up within the town.

In reply Superintendent Lindsay stated that the local DCU were in negotiations with the NIHE in order to set up a Community House in Riverside. He stated however that because of the restricted manpower available to him that he was unable to increase patrols within the area.

Members pointed out to Superintendent Lindsay that a Community House in Riverside was not what had been agreed. He undertook to further consider this issue

6 Questions from the Public

There were no questions received from the public before the deadline.

7 Measures to Tackle Anti-Social Behaviour in NI

The DPP Manager Michael McCrory introduced the above document and stated that the Partnership were required to formulate a response to it. It was agreed that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Miss Alison Scott should draw up a response along with the DPP Manager.

8 Setting Local DCU Policing Objectives for 2004/2005

Mr John McLaughlin outlined to Superintendent Lindsay the eight priorities for the 2004/2005 Magherafelt DCU Policing Plan, which the partnership had agreed at the private meeting, prior to this meeting.

After discussion the members agreed the following targets:

1	Domestic Burglary:	Reduce by 5%
2	Attacks on the Elderly:	There should be no increase in figures
3	Drink Driving:	Increase detection
3=	Speeding:	Increase in detections RTA reduction by 5% Excessive Speeding reduction by 5%
5	Assaults:	In line with NIPB recommendations
6	Drug Dealing:	In line with NIPB recommendations
7	Underage Drinking:	Objective and measured response
7=	Vandalism:	Reduce incidents by 5%

9 Public Consultation Report and Focus Groups – MORI

The DPP Manager, Mr Michael McCrory outlined the results of the above. It was agreed that consideration should be give to the setting up of three focus groups, one each in Magherafelt, Maghera and Draperstown.

10 Police Commendation Awards

Superintendent Lindsay stated for the information of the meeting that he was going to nominate the following staff for the Police Commendation Awards

- 1 Billy McCosh: Probationer of the Year
- 2 Steve McAuley: Community Officer
- 3 Patricia Roulston: Staff Member

Date of next meeting

Mr McLaughlin suggested that the next meeting be held in the Rural College, Draperstown on Monday 5 April 2004 at 8.00pm.

The meeting concluded at 10.40pm.

J A McLaughlin

The foregoing Minutes are hereby Confirmed.

_____ (Chairman)

_____ (Date)