

REPORT ITEM 4.2



Minutes of Public Meeting held on 1st December 2021

Venue: Manor Hotel, Ballymoney

Duration: 7pm – 9.35pm

Present:

Chair: Councillor D. Wilson

Ald. G. Duddy, L. Abernethy, S. Chambers, A. Tomb

Officers in Attendance: Head of Community & Culture, PCSP Manager, Business Support Officer

Statutory Agencies: Superintendent I. Magee PSNI, Detective Chief Superintendent Ian Saunders – Head of Criminal Investigation Branch

Apologies: Cllr. A. McQuillan, P. McQuillan

Agenda Item		Actions
1.	Introduction	
	<p>Chair, Cllr. D. Wilson welcomed and thanked the Public, Manor Hotel, PSNI, PCTF, PCSP member and local Elected Members on attending.</p> <p>The purpose of the Public Meeting is so that the PCSP Partnership can find out first-hand what the public think about policing, which will help the PCSP to develop action plans.</p> <p>He explained there would be an opportunity to ask questions. It was also requested no photographs or recordings of the event were taken, a note of the event will be recorded by PCSP staff and will not refer to any names.</p>	
2.	Policing and Community Safety Partnership	
	<p>The Chair gave a short presentation on the role of the PCSP.</p> <p>Policing and Community Safety Partnerships are statutory bodies established under the Justice Act</p>	

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>(NI) 2011. There are 11 throughout Northern Ireland, one in each council area.</p> <p>Each PCSP has a Policing Committee to take forward specific police monitoring and engagement functions, with the wider PCSP taking forward community safety related functions. "Community Safety" is about developing local solutions to local problems in respect of crime, the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour, enabling a partnership approach to resolving local community safety issues.</p>	
3.	<p>PSNI Presentation</p> <p>Superintendent I. Magee Current issues PSNI deal with are, scams, and social media and how young people interact and their activity with social media, season's greetings, beware of leaving things in cars and drinking and driving. PSNI work under the perimeter of the Police NI Act: Section 32 To protect life and preserve.</p> <p>Throughout Causeway Coast and Glens area the PSNI have responded to criminality over the last 6 years. PSNI have responded to murder, attempted murder, which left a long term impact on a 13 year old girl, shots and an older person, shots through windows, assaults, beaten with sledgehammer, a mother dragged to the ground, female hit with sledgehammer, arson, intimidation, pipe bombs, suspect device, bomb hoaxes. From 2018 to August 2021 there have been 38 incidents. PSNI have a duty to do something under Section 32 of the Police NI Act.</p> <p>Superintendent I. Magee PSNI, Magee listed the dates of incidents between, October 2020 to January 2021. When looking at the area we need to assess the resources to keep the area safe. The community provides the PSNI with the information, through the 101 number, online and the Neighbourhood Police Teams. This helps to ensure the safety of elderly and children. The Neighbourhood Police Teams seek opportunities to work with community groups and schools. If anyone know of anyone that the PSNI can work with they were asked to contact the PSNI. The PSNI want the cooperation of the community to continue.</p>	

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>The Local Policing team respond to 999 calls. Neighbourhood Policing Teams work with the community to identify issues. Roads Policing Unit move around different areas of the district to ensure safety. Record Structures, use video, body worn cameras to assist the evidence based teams. Air Support, apologies to families and elderly people, but PSNI are forced to use, if the criminality reduces then the use of Air Support will reduce. Air Support is also used for missing persons, events and evidence gathering.</p> <p>Police ombudsman of NI, the public can make a complaint to the Ombudsman for any potential misconduct. From October 2020 to September 2021 there were 14 per 1000 complaints for all of NI. In Causeway Coast and Glens area there were 9 per 1000, this is the lowest rate of all NI.</p> <p>In July 2020 PCTF were asked for specialist support. Since July 2020 violent activity has reduced by 60% and number of violent assaults have reduced by 100%. Three people have been charged with three investigations with the PPS for decision.</p> <p>Paramilitary Crime Task Force (PCTF) Detective Chief Superintendent Ian Saunders – Head of Criminal Investigation Branch gave a presentation.</p> <p>Background to PCTF PCTF established as part of the Fresh Start Agreement 2015, with a number of recommendations, one of which was to tackle paramilitary activity and organised crime through the creation of the PCTF. An independent panel of three people was set up make recommendations on the disbandment of paramilitary groups, from their recommendations the Executive published the Action Plan.</p> <p>The PCTF has been operational since 2018 and partners are PSNI, HMRC and NCA. It focuses on organisational crime linked to non national security</p>	
--	--	--

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>paramilitary groups. Based in locations around Northern Ireland and has close links with District Neighbourhood Policing Teams.</p> <p>PCTF deal with the highest threat, harm, risk and focus on six groups across Northern Ireland; East Belfast UVF INLA – North West Belfast & North West Derry/Londonderry North Antrim UDA South East UDA West Belfast UDA</p> <p>There is a wide range of criminality these groups are involved in, assaults, shootings, supply and distributing controlled drugs, blackmail, money laundering, intimidation. PCTF focused on organised crime with the C2 - Terrorism Investigation Unit focuses on national security issues including dissident republicans.</p> <p>The costs caused by paramilitary groups cannot be counted, they seek to exploit the vulnerable, intimidate communities. Organised crime costs the exchequer 37billion per year and £69,000,000 to the PCTF per year. The wider cost to the community cannot be quantified.</p> <p>Group Review and accountability process PCTF are accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board (NIPB) and the Independent Review Commission monitors the progress on tackling paramilitary crime.</p> <p>Performance Data</p> <p>Across Northern Ireland January – November 2021 Arrests: 74 Charge & report: 99 Searches: 166 Drug Seizures: 65 Vehicle Seizures: 5 Weapon Seizures: 12 Cash Seizures: £137,252</p> <p>Since PCTF was established 2018 the PSNI has delivered a number of outcomes that has led to a quantifiable level of disruption and detection of criminality within Northern Ireland.</p>	
--	---	--

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>Key statistics shown which details outcome reported Arrests(PSNI, HMRC & NCA): 391 Searches: 873 Charge & Reports: 264 Drugs Street Value £: £2,700,763 Weapon Seizures: 201</p> <p>PCTF activity in Causeway Coast and Glens Area, July 2020 to November 2021</p> <p>PCTF increased activity from July 2020 in response to increase in violence supported by intelligence 36 operations carried out 16 arrests under the Terrorism Act 19 active investigations underway 3 investigation reports with the Public Prosecution Service 60% reduction in the number of violence related incidents linked to paramilitary groups 50% reduction in the number of shooting incidents linked to paramilitary groups</p>	
4.	Questions	
	<p>Question Where do you get your information from?</p> <p>Answer Comes from a range of sources, it needs assessed and corroborated and is cross referenced by grading intelligence system. A complaint can be made to the Police Ombudsman.</p> <p>Question Rape cases has risen by 52% within the Borough, but 93% has no outcome. Can you encourage victims to report and how would you improve the outcome?</p> <p>Answer Public Prosecution Service have dedicated officers to support people through the system. There is also a Domestic Violence advocacy officer to support and encourage people through the system. We recognise the difficulty.</p> <p>Question Restorative practitioners working with others and PSNI to find resolutions. Observations on presentation;</p>	

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>How many people were charged there were 40 raids, 150 times the helicopter used but got nothing?</p> <p>Answer There have been charges and reports, sometimes outcomes are things not happening that you can't count.</p> <p>Question Recent charges cited but yet linking DNA to balaclavas, person had been ordered/coerced into that, why if you had intelligence one year ago did the PSNI not move in 1 year ago.</p> <p>Answer Not allowed to discuss live investigations.</p> <p>Question Can PSNI provide number of stop& searches of drugs and are they recorded the same?</p> <p>Answer Misuse of Drugs – 794, data over one year Under Section 24 of JSA 2003 – 282</p> <p>Question How Many arrested and charged?</p> <p>Answer You can submit an Freedom of Information to request specific data. 20% of all searches get a result.</p> <p>Question I have asked through Freedom of Information numerous times but not getting the information. There has been 50-60% reduction in violent crimes though the AIMS project and have been in dialogue with those who were working towards transition.</p> <p>Answer Yes it is a collective effort and transitioning remains the aspiration. It requires a long term solution e.g. safeguarding in schools, working with education, health and child protection, the PCTF is a short abrupt response.</p> <p>Question Is there any recourse to challenge a Freedom of Information request?</p> <p>Answer PSNI are happy to pick up and work with you, we have nothing to hide at a District level.</p>	
--	---	--

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>Question Does the Borough have a drugs problem?</p> <p>Answer Yes, 794 is a high number, this gives an indication of the problem.</p> <p>Question 9 Why do you work with known drug dealers?</p> <p>Answer We can't discuss an individual case, our intelligence is graded.</p> <p>Question 10 People have reported through Elected Members but no results this erodes the public's confidence in police.</p> <p>Answer Drugs are a problem, we need to prioritise according to the greatest harm to communities and need to investigate the highest priority.</p> <p>Question 11 Re Stop & Searches- a business opened in April and it had to close in July because PSNI searched for drugs. How does the owner repay the money that was borrowed to open the business?</p> <p>Answer The PCTF cannot tell people where the information comes from as it would cause danger. The information is corroborated and checked. We can't discuss individual cases.</p> <p>Question 12 How do I pay back the loan? If there were no charges and caused reputational damage. No confidence in how PSNI deal with information.</p> <p>Answer You can complain to the Police Ombudsman.</p> <p>Subsequent Comment</p>	
--	---	--

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>The owner did complain to the Police Ombudsman but received no answer. There is a financial loss to the owner</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>Then a solicitor can be engaged to pursue a civil case for the financial loss.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Regarding raids and searches, PSNI provide lots of information on Social Media and Press stating searches and items seized, that's is very specific information and people can be identified. Over the last 3-5 years people were raided with no charges brought from those searches/raids. The reason the UDA are still here, is they want to go away, if the drugs issue goes away.</p> <p>It astounded me that North Antrim was ignored in the Fresh Start money, none came to this area. I had made contact to the Department and I was told a study had been done and have asked for a copy of the report. It seems to me that there is no carrot just a big stick. These people are not drug dealers or criminals. The community of North Antrim are branded as criminals on television and that sets the work we have done back 6 months to 1 year.</p> <p>Any reason to why this area is not mentioned in Fresh Start?</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>We don't know why this area was not included in the Fresh Start. We are keen to see money coming into the area, if we could encourage that money to come in. We are keen to try to get money in to work with youth groups through the Aims Project and Councillors.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Same people are being stopped/searched/raided but with no result, consistently. We pass information to the PSNI but then the person who gave the information were searched and never given the reason why, no explanation. There was malicious</p>	
--	---	--

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>information received. That's why there is no confidence in PSNI.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Bringing the Belfast fit into a rural area does not suit the area. There is a common denominator, drug dealers. A lot of information was provided to police but nothing was done, they didn't do the job, drugs still rampant and that's why the trouble started again. If you go to the police it takes too long so they go to the paramilitary group. Paramilitary groups of this area have always been against drugs. We need a drugs taskforce not a Paramilitary Task Force.</p> <p>People believe that drug dealers are working with the PSNI. When PSNI deal with the drug problem then paramilitary groups will fade away.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>The PCTF sees a very different situation that is that paramilitarism is entwined with drugs.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>PSNI/PCTF have not answered any questions.</p> <p>January 2015 there was 1 murder and nothing until 2018. There were 38 incidents between 2018- 2021, people are reporting to police but they are not getting an outcome. Can you explain why the high outcome rate to drugs received yet no outcome? If I report to PSNI is it recorded as a crime?</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>Depends on how intelligence is assessed.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>There has been a lot of raids and people are stereotyped. What quantity of drugs have been found in those searches.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>Don't have that data.</p> <p>Statement</p>	
--	--	--

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>Cllr G.Duddy wanted assurance that the video recordings will be wiped under supervision of the chair.</p> <p>The Chair asked for assurance that it would be done.</p> <p>PSNI</p> <p>The recording of the body worn camera will not be uploaded or downloaded.</p> <p>Cllr G. Duddy requested that it be done in front of the Chair.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>If it were not for the paramilitaries Coleraine would be a Ballymena. I agree with the PCTF however what works in Belfast does not work here. Paramilitaries are not drug dealers I have fed information to the PSNI, its not the Chief Inspectors fault, its up above him.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Confidence in Policing is low, police cars outside and cameras on inside and the body language.</p> <p>Stop and searches are done by the same people and same car, they don't look in the cars properly, they are "winding" people up. The helicopter is always up between 7pm – 11pm, which means people what and when they can carry out crime. People report to me that the helicopter is keeping them and their children awake. What are police doing to build confidence with unionist communities?</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>Apologise that the helicopter is keeping people awake. The helicopter stops threats from happening and while the threat is there it is an option we will continue to use.</p> <p>I take on board the points about Social Media, it is managed by our communications department and agree it could be better. We need you to keep working with us.</p> <p>Question</p>	
--	---	--

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>Lady stated that a Police car is sitting outside her house all night in an unmarked car. She stated she looked out the window at 1.30am and they waved to her. It has been reported to the Police Ombudsman.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>PSNI agreed to follow up with Police Ombudsman female individual who claims PSNI are continually parked outside her house.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>I deal with a lot of reports/complaints to the Police Ombudsman and people are not getting any feedback from the Police Ombudsman or they reply to the complaint with no detail. Should people complain to Department of Justice Minister?</p> <p>There is confidence in policing, the community don't want your money. There are issues around the Neighbourhood Police Teams, they are not on the ground. What they want is to see officers on the ground.</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>PSNI agreed to follow up on issues with the Police Ombudsman.</p> <p>Question</p> <p>Why are South Armagh IRA not under investigation?</p> <p>Answer</p> <p>That area of threat is managed by MI5 and National Crime Agency not the PCTF.</p> <p>Statement</p> <p>A person from the AIMS Project Ballymoney made a statement regarding allegations that he had been approached by a member of the public, the member of the public informed the AIMS worker that the PSNI had stopped the member of the public while he was driving along the Sconce Road in Articlave.</p>	<p>PSNI to follow up with PONI</p>
--	--	------------------------------------

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>It was further alleged that the member of the public was on the Sconce road responding to a telephone call regarding him pricing a job (he is a tradesman).</p> <p>When stopped by the PSNI the person was asked to exit his car, he was then handed £500 by the PSNI.</p> <p>The member of the AIMS Project proceeded to place the £500 in front of myself, the Chair during the meeting stating it should be returned to the PSNI.</p> <p>Response</p> <p>The Chair made it clear to all in attendance at the meeting that I as chair of the PCSP, and the PCSP staff were there solely to carry out our functions as a PCSP, that the PCSP have no jurisdiction to deal with such issues and that the issues raised /allegations made were between the complainant and the PSNI alone.</p> <p>I asked the PSNI to remove the money immediately as the meeting had concluded, Chief Inspector Marty Reid who was in attendance counted the monies which totalled £500 in front of myself. Chief Inspector Reid then removed the £500.</p> <p>Close</p> <p>The Chair thanked everyone on attending the public meeting.</p>	
--	--	--

Meeting ended 9.35pm