

## REPORT ITEM 4.3



### Minutes of Public Meeting held on 30<sup>th</sup> March 2022

Venue: Roe Valley Arts & Cultural Centre, Limavady

Duration: 7pm – 9pm

Present:

Chair: Councillor D. Wilson

Cllr. B. Chivers, Cllr. A. Schenning, S.Chambers, S. McGregor, C. White

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

Statutory Agencies: Chief Inspector S. McIlDowney, NPT Inspector C. Shaw

There were 11 members of the public in attendance

Apologies: P. McQuillan

| Agenda Item |  | Actions |
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| 1.          | <b>Introduction</b>  |         |
|             | <p>Chair, Cllr. D. Wilson welcomed and thanked the Public, PSNI, PCSP members, local Elected Members and Council staff on attending the second of three public meetings. He also thanked RVACC for facilitating the meeting.</p> <p>He explained that the purpose of the Public Meeting is so that the PCSP Partnership can find out first-hand what the public think about policing issues and in particular around drugs and drug dealing, which will help the PCSP to develop action plans.</p> <p>He explained there would be an opportunity to ask questions later on in the meeting. 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.          | <b>Policing and Community Safety Partnership</b>   |         |
|             | The Chair gave a short presentation on the role of the PCSP.   |         |
| 3.          | <b>PSNI Presentation</b>   |         |

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|  | <p>Chief Inspector S. McIlldowney - Performance Chief for CC&amp;G area. The main points of her presentation are outlined below:-</p> <p><b>Overview of Crime Statistics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Crime has increased in CC&amp;G overall by 2%</li><li>• On average every 1 in 5 calls is to do with a vulnerable adult/Mental Health/Someone with underlying issues.</li><li>• New Domestic Legislation has also created a demand on resources.</li><li>• Resources in CC&amp;G is pressured – Limavady more so than Coleraine.</li></ul> <p><b>Roads Safety</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 6 Road Deaths YTD up to 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2022 in comparison with 15 PYTD. We would expect this figure to increase due to NW 200 taking place in May.</li><li>• PBT's (Preliminary Breath Tests) – 1.4.20 – 28.2.22 – 717 PBTs carried out resulting in 135 drug detections.</li><li>• Motoring Offences up until November 2021 – 2050 incidents.<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ FPN's (Fixed Penalty Notices) issued: –</li><li>○ 606 Endorsed</li></ul></li></ul> <p>331 Non-endorsed</p> <p>It is anticipated that this number will increase coming into the summer months. PSNI will work proactively with Roads Policing on this matter.</p> <p><b>Drugs</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 9 Drug related deaths reported within the Borough YTD. Primary drug currently being used is a cocktail of pregabalin, diazepam and cocaine.</li><li>• Drugs coming into the area from Dubai and Holland.</li><li>• Our outcome is good in terms of seizures and taking drugs off the streets. We would urge people to report any suspicious activity to PSNI.</li><li>• Drugs Offences overall in CC&amp;G are down by 69 incidents:-<br/>353 Drugs offences recorded YTD<br/>77 incidents in Limavady – down by 5<br/>Outcome rate is also down.</li></ul> |  |
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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response to Drugs – This is done by NPT's and LPTs. Paramilitary Crime Officers are only brought into the Borough if we have the intelligence to support bringing them in.</li> <li>• Drug Trafficking Offences are down:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ 69 PYTD</li> <li>○ 64 YTD</li> <li>○ Outcomes remain the same.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• ASB – Overall YTD down by over 1000 incidents which equates to a reduction of 23.9%– This can be attributed to the good work between communities and PSNI.</li> <li>• ASB – Limavady – <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Environmental - reduction of 21 incidents from last year which equates to a reduction of 3%</li> <li>Nuisance – reduction of 216 incidents from last year which equates to a reduction of 21%.</li> <li>Personal – Increase of 48 incidents YTD which equates to an increase of 12%.</li> </ul> Initiatives to tackle ASB include:- </li> <li>• CC&amp;G Support Hub – supports Repeat Offending Unit by signposting and interventions for people who require support.</li> <li>• Through Women's Aid we have a new Domestic Violence Advocate working with us.</li> </ul> <p>Inspector Colin Shaw introduced himself as Neighbourhood Inspector. He expressed frustration that the (Neighbourhood Policing Team) NPT in Limavady was disbanded at the start of the Covid Pandemic which was a critical time for the organisation and the effect was felt within the community. NPT has been re-established since January 2022 and consists of 8 police officers for the whole of the Borough. The main points of his presentation are outlined as follows:-</p> <p>Drugs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Drugs continue to be an issue – NPT are glad to be at the forefront of searching houses. Seizures include cannabis, cocaine, pregabalin which has become the new drug of choice for this area (also known as lyrica). We have seized almost 10,000 Pregabalin tablets.</li> <li>• They get results through the Criminal Justice System as well.</li> </ul> <p>Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB)</p> |  |
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|           | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ASB is a current priority in Limavady.</li> <li>• We address issues through community groups and get feedback from the community to understand local needs.</li> <li>• Responses include local officers on the beat in the evenings speaking to people. Our intention is never to criminalise young people but to try to make them understand the effect they are having on elderly people in their community. We work with Roe Valley Residents' Association a to try to educate the young people.</li> <li>• We provide reassurance to the community. We have been able to issue a few CCTV systems, ASB cameras and dashcams, provided by PCSP.</li> <li>• Weekly meetings take place currently to identify the priorities. We are now seeing the impact of the work taking place.</li> </ul> <p>The Chair thanked PSNI for their presentations. He said it was important to have an honest and frank debate and opened the floor to the public to raise questions.</p> |  |
| <b>4.</b> | <b>Questions &amp; Discussion</b>   |  |
|           | <p><b>Question</b><br/>Is it possible to have separate figures for drink and drugs related convictions for driving offences?</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>It is classed as one offence through Saturn. There was massive success in terms of convictions for drink driving off the back of Covid. It is also more difficult to detect driving offences as a result of taking drugs when using a breathalyser. When we look at RTC's – drugs are definitely a factor in relation to them.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>What is the general difference in proportion of crime in rural areas compared with urban areas? Is the marking of agricultural machinery continuing?</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>Rural crime is significantly down. There tends to be less crime in rural areas as there are less people living there. CC&amp;G Rural Crime 349 YTD compared with nearly 1400 ten years ago.</p>   |  |

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|  | <p>Trailer marking is continuing – crime prevention is very important, especially in rural areas.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>Elderly people living on their own – is there any provision for security equipment? A lot of elderly women being attacked in the Ballykelly area.</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>Text Alert works very well in this situation. There is an increase in burglaries involving the over 60's – 80's overall in the province. People need to be reporting suspicious activity.</p> <p><b>Question from The Chair</b><br/>How do people find the 101 system?</p> <p><b>Statement from Member of the Public</b><br/>While I appreciate PSNI are under a great deal of pressure, I don't think there is a lot of empathy from the call handler or enough time taken to deal with the call.</p> <p><b>Response</b><br/>Reduction in resources has contributed to the pressures/issues in call handling centres, taking specialised frontline officers off the ground. Staff is made up of civilian and frontline officers. They work 12 hour shifts which are emotionally intensive.</p> <p>Latest Statistics –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 100% of calls are answered within 20 minutes.</li><li>• 500 reports come through online per week</li><li>• 10,000 calls received per week</li><li>• 4,000 999 calls received per week</li></ul> <p><b>Question</b><br/>How do you feel about the percentage of drugs you are stopping ie. 10%?</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>It is nowhere near the amount we should be taking off the streets. There is also the issue of postal drugs</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>Constituents are frustrated when they report drug dealing and feel that nothing is done about it. How do</p> |  |
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|  | <p>you let them know there is a process you have to follow and you aren't letting it go on?</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>T/Sgt dealing with this issue – carried out a leaflet drop and we are still working on the particular area specified.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>I am glad ASB team are back again. Have you seen a reduction in ASB since the last meeting? I would also like to commend the community groups for engaging.</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>I have a plan in place until the end of April 2022, supported by our part-time police officers working with Neighbourhood Policing Teams. Community Groups and Youth Groups are working with the young people. We are on the enforcement end.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>A lot of bikes have been given to PSNI. Have you been able to train officers to use them?</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>Quite a few of the officers are trained on the use of the bikes, training stopped due to Covid. We are getting ten bikes and hopefully getting electric bikes as well which would allow us to cover a lot more distance and have a lot more flexibility.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>What is the feedback in relation to issues in the town centre affecting local businesses? At one of the town centre meetings we agreed on a simple template whereby residents/parents would be lettered. Has that happened?</p> <p><b>Response</b><br/>Feedback from officers out and about is that there isn't as much activity at night. Part of that is down to Partnership approach.<br/>In relation to the letter – 300 have been delivered in the town centre and in the Roemill Road area. We will continue to look at it over the next number of weeks.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>In relation to interventions which could alleviate ASB when youth clubs close – there used to be an</p> |  |
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|  | <p>initiative called Midnight Soccer which was run in partnership between PSNI, PCSP and Council on Friday and Saturday nights from 10pm - midnight. Would this be something PSNI would be in a position to get involved in?</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>We would be very keen to do that if we can prioritise it and get it worked in with the shifts.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>Is Crime Prevention work being done in schools. This seems to have fallen by the wayside</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>The school liaison officer has recently retired. We need someone trained to that level to go into schools and speak to young people. This isn't a priority at the moment as we need our officers out on the street on a Friday and Saturday night.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>Are PSNI doing a lot of work with community groups? Why are there not more people at this meeting?</p> <p><b>Chair's Response</b><br/>We tried to advertise this meeting as best we could. I would be keen to see these public meetings continue and grow. There were 100 people in attendance at a recent meeting with the Organised Task Force.</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>The appetite is not there to engage. The meeting was well advertised.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>Are PSNI doing a lot of work with community groups? How important is interaction with community groups?</p> <p><b>Answer</b><br/>We are very appreciative of the involvement of our Councillors, community reps and PCSP members. We rely on interaction with people and communities - that is where we learn what the community think. We continually need the reflective voice of the community. Statistics don't tell us the whole story. ASB is a big issue. Community is important in problem solving – e.g., disputes between neighbours as we don't have the resources to sort these disputes out on our own.</p> |  |
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|  | <p>How do you prevent your children from getting involved in ASB? – Through education. We either prevent or deter.</p> <p><b>Statement</b><br/>The Community are there to help and advise but it is also down to parenting.</p> <p><b>Statement</b><br/>The attitude of people on the ground is that they find PSNI to be ineffective and inefficient.</p> <p><b>Statement from Chair</b><br/>From a PCSP point of view I wanted to see relationship between PSNI and community grow. That has been difficult due to Covid and various political issues. Police officers on the ground and the public can work well together. I am enthused to see members of the public present here this evening. We need NPTs on the ground. I would like to see these meeting happen more regularly – we need public to tell us where to help them. There needs to be continuity.</p> <p><b>Statement</b><br/>I have been a member of the DPP and PCSP for 15 years and I think it comes down to fear – people don't like to be seen coming to public meetings.</p> <p><b>Response</b><br/>An option would be for us to be here in person and live stream the meeting where people can join online.</p> <p>Perhaps non-attendance reflects things are not as bad as we think. If a lot more people turned up it would be indicative of a lot more issues.</p> <p><b>Statement</b><br/>I have been a member of staff and involved for a number of years with DPP and PCSP. In my experience you rarely get people turning up to public meetings. It is an old-fashioned way of communicating. People communicate in a different way now – Zoom, online discussions/meetings with youth groups. Holding themed meetings such as Neighbourhood Watch, Schools and Elderly people means you are getting people in a room for a different reason or context. People are afraid to attend public meetings and they are not conducive to having meaningful conversations.</p> |  |
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|  | <p><b>Question</b><br/>Is the Neighbourhood Policing Team at its full complement? Is Limavady Police Station under-staffed? It is important that NPTs are seen out and about during the summer months. Limavady NPT previously had a leaflet displaying photographs and names of each officer. Would it be useful to consider doing this again? Also, what are the opening hours of Limavady Station?</p> <p><b>Response</b><br/>LPTs are under pressure.<br/>Limavady Station is open 24/7 in terms of response out of it.<br/>Enquiry office is open 11am – 7pm.<br/>Resources of NPT in Limavady is currently at full complement. If it is directed, you have to disband them to go into other LPTs we have to do that. There are pressures such as long-term sickness on NPTs for CC&amp;G. We will be setting up a NPT in Ballymoney as of next week but not to the detriment of Limavady.</p> <p><b>Statement</b><br/>NPT used to have a really good relationship with some of the young people in and around Dungiven. NPT has now disappeared.</p> <p><b>Response</b><br/>NPT shift pattern changed. We saw a loss of a lot of good Neighbourhood Officers. In J District the NPT work 7 days/week and 16 hours/day.</p> <p><b>Question</b><br/>A query around the line of defence between our children and drug dealers in our community. There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> party involved in this – Criminal Justice System (CJS). What is your view in relation to the results from CJS and the impact on the community? People get frustrated when they don't see results because Criminal Justice System say they don't have sufficient evidence to prosecute.</p> <p><b>Statement from Chair</b><br/>From a PCSP point of view we have written to the Justice Minister on quite a few occasions to raise concerns regarding local issues when we have felt the system has failed us. When PSNI act on</p> |  |
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|           | <p>complaints we give them, the end result isn't what we want it to be.</p> <p><b>Response</b><br/>I would say to take us out of it. Behind every crime is a victim and that is frustrating when they don't see results. It is ongoing work in progress. We should be trying to divert people away from CJS. Education, prevention and partnership is the way to achieve it.</p> |  |
| <b>5.</b> | <b>Close</b>   |  |
|           | <p>The Chair thanked the members of the public, PCSP members, Councillors, Council staff and PSNI for attending this meeting and for the interaction between everyone and PSNI.</p>  |  |

Meeting ended 9pm