

REPORT ITEM 4.2



Minutes of Public Meeting held on 28th March 2022

Venue: Sheskburn, Ballycastle

Duration: 7pm – 8.15pm

Present:

Chair: Councillor D. Wilson

Lee Kane

Officers in Attendance: PCSP Manager, Business Support Officer, Business Support Assistant

Statutory Agencies: Superintendent Jeremy Lindsay, Chief inspector Sinead McIlldowney, NPT Inspector Bjorn O'Brien

Agenda Item		Actions
1.	Introduction	
	<p>Chair, Cllr. D. Wilson welcomed and thanked the Public, PSNI, PCSP members, Elected Members and staff 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 drugs in the area and across the borough to help us make 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 (NI) 2011. There are 11 throughout Northern Ireland, one in each council area.</p>	

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<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. Some of these include projects relating to safe homes/neighbourhood watch schemes/campaigns relating to drugs/support hubs and grant schemes. Aim of the PCSP is to make it safer for all.</p>	
3.	<p>PSNI Presentation</p> <p>Superintendent Jeremy Lindsay Thanked Chair and PCSP Manager for invite and their help in the past. Welcomed Sinead and Bjorn from PSNI team to the meeting.</p> <p>Superintendent gave an overview of the changes in policing. Member of staff is in place to deal for supporting victims of domestic abuse and Sergeant for Neighbourhood watch (NHW) schemes. NHW is crucial and underused and stated that he would like to see this working better regarding the passage of information to address anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Gave a flavour of crime trends, during covid there was a change with where crimes were happening, there has been a lull in ASB but now summer will attract people to the North coast so crime will increase.</p> <p>Deaths/Serious Injury: Been 3 deaths in Glens since start of 2021. Expect to see more usage of roads with the North West coming up. Priority going forward is policing of roads. In Ballycastle see cars speeding and the impact this has on the older community.</p> <p>Robberies: Down 27%, had 22 previous year and 16 this year.</p> <p>Residential Burglaries: Not as high during covid but figures increasing . Had an extra 35 residential burglaries this year, caught more people and bringing them to court. 50% of burglaries are due to houses being left open.</p> <p>Vehicle offences: Down 8% but in summer will probably see an increase in this figure.</p> <p>Criminal damage:</p>	

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>The same</p> <p>Possession of offensive weapons: 25% reduction</p> <p>Public Order offences: Down but expecting to see an increase in this.</p> <p>Driving Aspects: Breath tests - 2 years ago, 700 breath tests carried out, last year 1400 tested. 175 this year failed the test compared to 135 the year before.</p> <p>Over 2000 motorists have been prosecuted for normal motoring offences.</p> <p>Rural Crimes Farming: Down in last 12 years since crimes recorded which is good news but still 700 pieces of equipment stolen.</p> <p>Drugs issue with paramilitaries and type of activity associated with this, around assaults, pipe bombs and shootings, is already worse than last year and increasing again.</p> <p>Complaints around call management & contacting us: Number of complaints around the 101 system. Last month 8000 non-emergency calls were taken, 5000 were answered in 60 seconds, 91% of these were answered within 6 minutes. It can take 20 minutes to get through, due to not enough resources in call management.</p> <p>Neighbourhood Teams: Will be changes in NH team and officers over next couple of weeks. PCSP will communicate this re changes in the team so public know who the local officer is and point of contact.</p>	
4.	Questions	
	<p>Superintendent asked for questions and these were answered as follows:</p> <p>Question 1 Drug dealer living in person's estate 2 years in July, police not interested, affecting family physically and mentally. Driving a car with no insurance. Is nothing being done about him in this town?</p>	

REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>Answer 1 No-one is off limits, we will deal with this, but we need intelligence and info to do this. Intelligence is graded and it needs to be graded before we can search a house. If we get a warrant we can search the house. We need to catch the person driving an untaxed or uninsured car. Assured that if PSNI have intelligence we will look for them. Lots of prescription drugs are being used now to get high but we need to find out who is bringing the drugs in. Assured members of public that anything they give us, we will work with and drug dealers are at the top of the chain. Biggest ask from this is don't assume we know everything. There is not a perfect system and staff constantly tied up with domestic violence issues.</p> <p>Chair encouraged the public to speak to police and any of the elected representatives across the borough at any time.</p> <p>Question 2 Know issue has been on-going for a while with regards to numerous people in a different flat, concern raised about carers having to go into a block of flats where there was a person with a baseball bat. Lots of fear out in the community.</p> <p>Answer 2 We will do our best to put offenders before the courts but unfortunately, they are released again. Housing Executive can fix the problem short term but requested that intelligence is passed onto PSNI.</p> <p>Question 3 Concern raised about possibly losing the NHW scheme in the area. Communication with NHW co-ordinators and lack of personal contact has completely gone. NHW co-ordinators felt fault is with superiors. How many NHW schemes are there in Ballycastle and is it possible to extend the scheme?</p> <p>Answer 3 There is a Neighbourhood Police Team(NPT) officer there and we need the NPT officers to be known and who they are / getting them to be available is a priority.</p>	
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REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>Question 4</p> <p>Why is 101 such a problem? End up getting through to Newry or Derry/Londonderry and they do not know the area, results in lack of direct communication back.</p> <p>Answer 4</p> <p>PSNI will have NPT officers in the district early mornings, we know there are gaps and what resources we have. In another 4 weeks we can provide names and contact details of these officers.</p> <p>Question 5</p> <p>Text system has disappeared and NHW not informed about this. It is like a racetrack between Larne-Portrush 5.30am Sunday racing starts. Racers ignore the speed limit and on the straight are hitting speeds of 120-150 mph</p> <p>What is being done about the motorcyclist accidents/pending fatalities on the road at Smugglers Inn?</p> <p>Answer 5</p> <p>This falls back to resources. The traffic branch were in the North Coast at the weekend. It is Likely to get worse with North West 200 and Easter coming up. We have to put a request in for extra resources which can take several weeks if approved. There have been high numbers in drink driving and the speed device machine was destroyed in Aghadowey, Curragh Road.</p> <p>Superintendent Lindsay then handed over to Chief Inspector McIlldowney to discuss the Drugs figures and overview.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 9 suspicious drug deaths- Trend in district is to take a cocktail of drugs- In offences recorded in area year to date these are down by 61, so a 1.9% improvement- 80% of all crime is re-offenders and 70% of these crimes are drug users- In Glens there were 27 recorded offences, down by 13. Reduction of 13.4% of offences.- Would like to see a drive in tackling drugs- Seek external funding as a possible way to reduce issue.- Trafficking Drugs in Glens- increase of 2 recorded this year, up from 5 to 7 equals 28%, in line with overall figure of 64 recorded in CCG area.	
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REPORT ITEM 4.2

	<p>NPT Inspector</p> <p>Most of the Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) in Ballycastle is the seafront and at the weekends people congregate in Diamond area.</p> <p>Sunday night in the Glens there is a high incidence of ASB</p> <p>Motoring Police at Portrush/Portstewart areas -13 complaints from 20th March and 22 calls by the following week.</p> <p>Extra 30 police officers called in last week in area in response to these and to deal with enforcement and education</p> <p>In Ballycastle can be hard to get more officers to cover area and need to support each other.</p> <p>There is a need to include NHW on the PCSP agenda, to be discussed at a Partnership meeting.</p> <p>Question 6</p> <p>Asked who is bringing in these drugs and what is drug culture like in Ballycastle and what should parents be aware of?</p> <p>Answer 6</p> <p>Drug cartels are world-wide with various routes into the country, from S. America via Holland via sea routes. There are no major drug dealers in Ballycastle area, but they are close by. Not ultimately paramilitaries involved in this. Parents need to take responsibility for their children, could get a bad cocktail of drugs. 2 officers are working on postal drugs issue across the area, relying on drug dogs for this. Heroin and human trafficking are not an issue across the area.</p> <p>Close</p> <p>The Chair asked if there were any further questions and then thanked everyone on attending the public meeting.</p>	
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Meeting ended 8.15pm