

Minutes of Mid Ulster Policing and Community Safety Partnership meeting held on 4 September 2024 in Council Chamber, Cookstown and via MS Teams at 3.30pm

- Present:** Councillor Christine McFlynn (Chair), Councillor Eimear Carney, Councillor Clement Cuthbertson, Councillor Anne Forde, Councillor Donna Mullin, Councillor Brian McGuigan, Councillor John McNamee, Councillor Sean McPeake
- Sue Chada, Robert Colvin, Niamh Doris, Ian Irwin, Grace Meerbeek, Ciaran McElhone, Pearse McFlynn, Pamela Stewart
- Sharon Crooks (NIHE), Chief Inspector Dodds (Roads Policing) Sinead Dolan (YJA), Ryan McGee (EA Youth), Superintendent Daniel McPhillips (PSNI), Leo Quinn (EA Youth), T/Chief Inspector Beverlie Reid (PSNI), Denise Smith (MUDC)
- Apologies:** Councillor Eva Cahoon, Alison Campbell- Smyth (NH&SCT), Michelle Grant (PBNI), Councillor Deirdre Varsani
- In Attendance:** Michael McCrory (PCSP Manager), Annette McGahan (PCSP Officer), Shauna McCloskey (PCSP Officer), Martina McCullagh (PCSP Assistant)

The Meeting commenced at 3.33pm.

PCSP318/24 WELCOME

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn welcomed all to the meeting.

PCSP319/24 DECLARATION OF INTEREST

Members were reminded of their obligation in relation to declarations of interest.

PCSP320/24 EA YOUTH SERVICE PRESENTATION – LEO QUINN

Leo Quinn provided an excellent presentation detailing a comprehensive calendar of Programmes and Engagement work carried out by EA Youth Service during the previous 6 month period.

These include various programmes in schools; Intergenerational work in the community; Healthy Minds Project; On-Line Safety Programmes; Residential Experiences; Self Care; Volunteer Week; Cultural Expressions Week; Needs based workshops; Leadership Programmes; Inclusion; PRISM Group Cookstown; International Trips and Summer Programmes.

Leo Quinn advised that the official opening of Cookstown Youth Centre which is based at the library and part of Southwest College will take place very soon, PCSP Members are welcome to attend. Also, an exciting move in Dungannon to the Teachers Centre on Thomas Street will allow programmes to be delivered in-house rather than sourcing outside venues.

Training week will take place next week and will involve delivering programmes dealing with issues around tolerance, understanding and acceptance to schools

which have requested assistance in this area. As part of the upcoming PCSP Awareness night this will take the form of a celebration of tolerance and acceptance and will be delivered to young people across Mid Ulster district, the main theme will be the need to feel safe in their own area.

Three 'Engage for Change' programmes will be delivered in Cookstown, Dungannon and Magherafelt during the next quarter. Police and EA Youth Service records show there has been zero re-offending from the many past participants in these programmes.

Clonoe Young Women's group continue to work on their 'Rural Safety Plan' which will be delivered across the district, PCSP Members are welcome to attend.

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn thanked Leo Quinn for the excellent presentation and commended EA Youth Service on the volume of work they have carried out with young people across Mid Ulster District. The presentation will be circulated to Members.

Members questions and comments

In response to a question from Grace Meerbeek in relation to the 'Inclusion and Diversity Seesaw App' and the possibility of providing training to PCSP Members, Leo Quinn advised that he would check this and provide an update.

In response to a question from Robert Colvin in relation to what EA Youth Service recognise as the main issues that negatively impacts someone's mental health, Leo Quinn stated there are a myriad of causes including the use of social media, FOMO (fear of missing out), exam stress and the come-down from taking drugs which results in their problems appearing worse.

Ryan McGee commended Leo Quinn on the compilation of an excellent presentation and praised all the EA Youth Service staff who have worked extremely hard to deliver the many programmes. EA Youth Service work closely with the Voluntary Sector and other Statutory Agencies. A large volume of information including thematic pieces of work, statistics and outcomes is available and can be shared if requested by Members. The funding provided by Mid Ulster PCSP towards an array of programmes is greatly appreciated and an invitation was extended to Members to attend events as their presence is an enormous boost to the young participants. A calendar of EA Youth Service events will be provided to PCSP in due course and circulated to Members.

Responding to a question from Sue Chada in relation to how volunteers are recruited, Leo Quinn advised that there is a progression route and some of the programme participants go on to be volunteers within EA Youth Service, there is also an open recruitment process.

PCSP321/24 ROADS POLICING PRESENTATION – CHIEF INSPECTOR DODDS

Chief Inspector Dodds, Head of Roads Policing advised that 41 people have been killed on our roads this year to date compared with 46 at the same time last year.

The two age groups involved in the most fatal to serious collisions are the 20 – 30 and 50 – 70 age groups, there are also issues with younger road users. He referred to the 'Fatal 5' causes of deaths on our roads.

- Speeding
- Driving without due care and attention
- Not wearing a seatbelt
- Distraction (mobile phone)
- Driving under the influence of drink and/or drugs

Resources are stretched, Roads Policing Education Officers have been cut from 7 to 3, these officers are required to cover all secondary schools and community groups across Northern Ireland.

Chief Inspector Dodds stated that everyone is vulnerable on our roads, every road and every journey are dangerous and asked Mid Ulster PCSP to help get this message across to the public.

The Chair thanked Chief Inspector Dodds for the informative presentation and expressed concern at the low level of resources available to Roads Policing Education for all of Northern Ireland.

Members questions and comments

In response to a question from Robert Colvin in relation to what improvements the DVA are doing to help reduce deaths on our roads, Chief Inspector Dodds advised that discussions are ongoing regarding the introduction of a 'graduated driving license'. This would mean all new drivers would only receive their full license when specific stipulations are fulfilled which would include more training.

Responding to a question from Pamela Stewart regarding dispelling the myth that speeding does not kill, Chief Inspector Dodds advised that they utilise social media outlets to report on cases that have gone through the court system where speeding has been the involved to help highlight the danger and the devastating impact it has on families.

In response to a question from Grace Meerbeek in relation to how a particular speed limit is attributed to a particular road, Chief Inspector Dodds advised that engineers from DfI assess the road and decide on the appropriate speed limit, signage and lighting requirements. If there are concerns regarding a road a reassessment can be requested from DfI.

Sue Chada agreed with Robert Colvin in relation to the DVA being more proactive around steps they can take to help reduce road traffic collisions. The introduction of more educational mechanisms from a young age so that young people are fully aware of the dangers of driving long before they become a driver.

Ciaran McElhone stated that driving instructors tend to teach learner drivers the route they would follow during their driving test which is very limiting and does not allow the learner to experience a full range of driving conditions, which would better prepare them for driving following their test, this should be reviewed.

Chief Inspector Dodds advised that he would raise these valid points with Test Centre representatives at an upcoming meeting.

Ciaran McElhone referred to several requests he submitted to DfI for a speed limit review which did not result in a reduction and would have concerns what DfI are prepared to offer.

In response to a comment by Councillor McGuigan regarding some roads having no speed limits signs displayed, Chief Inspector Dodds advised Members to provide the exact locations where there is no signage, and these would be passed on to DfI for checking.

Ian Irwin asked the following questions;

What is the current staff level for Roads Policing?

Chief Inspector Dodds advised that the current staff level in roads policing is approximately 130 people, this is lowest resource level in the past 10 years. As resource levels have gone down, fatalities on our roads have increased, there is a clear correlation between both. An Garda Síochána are aware of the same indicators.

What type of drug driving test kit is used in the rest of the UK?

Chief Inspector Dodds advised that the rest of the UK use the 3S test kit, as soon as the 6S test is certified they will switch to it.

What support and self-care are offered to police officers dealing with the stress and emotions within roads policing?

Chief Inspector Dodds advised there is no special support provided to the collision investigation unit as there is no surplus funding set aside for this purpose. Through a charity organisation and a private donation an away day was arranged for officers to help with techniques to deal with stress and improve mental health.

Drug Driving Test

In response to a request from Councillor McNamee for an update on drug driving test, Chief Inspector Dodds advised that a pilot drug driving test went live on the 7 August 2024, it is an initiative that has been used by An Garda Síochána for some time. It is called a 3S test, is similar to a Covid test, takes 7 minutes to show a result and can detect the presence of cocaine and cannabis, each kits costs £30 approximately. An Garda Síochána now use a 6S test kit which can detect a greater range of drugs, as soon as this is certified by DfI it will be used in Northern Ireland. An Garda Síochána have found that the real value of the kit is that it is a deterrent to people as they are aware they can be randomly stopped and asked to take the test. Funding for the kits is limited in Northern Ireland.

Councillor McNamee stated that it is great to have this initiative up and running and it will hopefully have a positive impact as a deterrent and detection.

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn thanked Chief Inspector Dodds for the informative presentation.

PCSP322/24 MINUTES OF MID ULSTER POLICING & COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26 JUNE 2024

The Minutes of Mid Ulster Policing and Community Safety Partnership meeting held on Wednesday 26 June 2024 were approved by Members.

Proposed by: Councillor John McNamee
Seconded by: Niamh Doris

PCSP323/24 MATTERS ARISING

PCSP313/24 PCSP 306/24 / PCSP298/24 / PCSP290/23 MATTERS ARISING PCSP285/23 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Focus Meeting to discuss flags and offensive posters erected in Town Centres across Mid Ulster District

The PCSP Manager advised that following the meeting in February 2024, he and the Good Relations Officer had individual meetings with representatives from each of the organisations who use Cookstown town centre. The sharing of e-mail addresses was discussed to have a line of communication open between organisations. In line with GDPR, we are currently awaiting permission from a few organisations prior to sharing e-mail addresses.

Councillor McNamee stated that these engagement meetings need to be re-energised to ensure that our town centres are safe shared spaces for all to enjoy.

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn agreed that a follow up meeting should be arranged in Cookstown to engage with stakeholders.

With regard to coverage Councillor Cuthbertson stated that he had spoken about discussing all the trunk roads leading into Dungannon when this was first raised by Councillor McNamee, and was advised that only town centres would be the area for discussion. Councillor McPeake stated he was the outgoing chair at the time this was originally raised and reiterated that it was purely town centres that would be discussed, commencing with Cookstown, followed by Dungannon and Magherafelt. For further clarification, the purpose of these meetings is to hopefully agree a way forward with all organisations being involved and on board regarding the removal of flags, posters and emblems in a timely manner.

PCSP316/24 - ANY OTHER BUSINESS - Arrange a Community Engagement meeting with residents and Local Neighbourhood Police to discuss anti-social behaviour issues in Coalisland – requested by Councillor Malachy Quinn

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn advised that a community meeting to address anti-social behaviour issues in Coalisland will take place on Thursday 19 September 2024 in The Cornmill, Coalisland at 7pm. Details will be circulated to Members.

PCSP324/24 EXPRESSION OF INTEREST – BEAM CREATIVE NETWORK

Shauna McCloskey, PCSP Officer sought approval for an Expression of Interest received from Beam Creative Network to deliver their Internet Safety Programme 'Who's at the Door' in Primary Schools across the district. The

target age group is Key Stage 2 children P5 – P7. The budget for this programme is approximately £3,000 which equates to 15 workshops delivered to 15 primary schools. The Programme is always well received with excellent feedback.

Councillor Cuthbertson referred to the need to ensure that all primary schools across the district get the opportunity to avail of this programme.

Robert Colvin agreed with the need to rotate which primary schools receive this programme to ensure all schools receive it at some point, which may require a review of the use of 'first come, first served' basis.

In response to a query from Robert Colvin in relation to what type of programme evaluation takes place, Shauna McCloskey, PCSP Officer advised that an internal Outcome Based Accountability (OBA) is carried out annually.

Proposed: Robert Colvin

Seconded: Councillor John McNamee

PCSP325/24 ROAD SAFETY QUIZ

Shauna McCloskey, PCSP Officer sought approval to a request from Road Safety NI for funding to assist with the delivery of the annual Road Safety Quiz. The funding of approximately £1,000 would cover venue hire and refreshment costs to deliver the local heat and the final of the annual Road Safety Quiz.

Proposed: Councillor Sean McPeake

Seconded: Sue Chada

PCSP326/24 AGEWELL FUNDING

The PCSP Manager reminded Members that 2 amounts were previously agreed, firstly £5,000 for the Agewell tender which did not include the 'Handy Van' scheme or £15,000 for the Agewell tender which did include the 'Handy Van' Scheme. Following a meeting this morning with all concerned, it was agreed to include the 'Handy Van' scheme within the tender documents, therefore, as previously agreed PCSP will contribute £15,000 to Agewell on that basis.

PCSP327/24 PCSP MEETING TIMES

The PCSP Manager referred to the recent survey conducted with Members around meeting start times, the results show that the current start time remains the most favourable and the continuation of hybrid meetings.

PCSP328/24 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

PUBLIC PROSECUTION SERVICE FOR NORTHERN IRELAND

T/Chief Inspector Reid reminded Members that a representative from the Policy Branch of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) will be attending the next PCSP meeting in December 2024 and asked if Members if they had any specific questions that they wanted addressed.

Niamh Doris asked for information around the level of evidence required to allow a case to be brought to court.

Niamh Doris sought clarification on the 'opt in' scheme in relation to victims being notified when an offender is being released from prison.

Councillor McNamee sought clarification regarding the threshold requirements in relation to the release of serial offenders.

Sue Chada asked for an overview of the complete process including who is provided with updates and why the lengthy delay in cases moving forward.

If Members have any further questions, these should be e-mailed to the PCSP Manager and will be forwarded to T/Chief Inspector Reid.

FORUM TO DISCUSS COMPLEX ASB CASES

Sharon Cooks, NIHE referred to complex anti-social behaviour cases that they encounter and the current joint work that takes place with the PSNI, and asked if it would be possible to set up a group that would include Environmental Health Department and the Youth Justice Agency to get input on these cases.

In response, the PCSP Manager advised that this was previously established with an information agreement in place to allow NIHE, Environmental Health and PSNI to have discussions and share information in relation to individual cases. The PCSP Manager will check with Environmental Health regarding any change in the agreement and provide an update to Sharon Crooks.

REQUEST FOR UPDATE ON 2 INCIDENTS IN COOKSTOWN

Grace Meerbeek commended the engagement work carried out with various communities by the Neighbourhood Policing Team in Cookstown.

In response to a request by Grace Meerbeek for an update on damage caused to a car belonging to an Indian family and to a barber shop in Cookstown, T/Chief Inspector Reid advised that investigations are on-going.

PCSP329/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next PCSP meeting will take place on Wednesday 11 December 2024 in Council Chamber, Dungannon at 3.30pm.

The Chair, Councillor McFlynn thanked everyone for attending today's meeting.

The meeting ended at 5.24pm