

LISBURN AND CASTLEREAGH CITY COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting in Public of the Policing and Community Safety Partnership held in the Enler Community Centre, Dundonald, on Wednesday 19th October 2022 at 7.00pm

PRESENT: Councillor J Gallen (Chairman)
Councillor N Anderson
Councillor A Ewing
Councillor H Legge
Councillor John Palmer
Councillor S Skillen
Mr J Bentley
Mrs G Conroy
Mrs P Leeson

IN ATTENDANCE: Acting PCSP/Manager Services Manager
PCSP Officer (SA)
PCSP Officer (JB)
Member Services Officer (CH)
Administration Officer (EW)

Designated Organisations
Chief Inspector I McCormick, PSNI
Sergeant S Regan, PSNI
Inspector N Rafferty, PSNI
Mr D Marley, NIHE
Ms E Millar, Education Authority

ALSO ATTENDED: Alderman D Drysdale
Councillor M Gregg

Commencement of the Meeting

The Chairman, Councillor J Gallen, welcomed those present to the meeting. He indicated that the theme for the meeting would be youth engagement and he referred to the presentations which would be delivered by Street Pastors, Dreamscheme and Lisburn Castlereagh Youth Council. He advised that PSNI officers were in attendance to answer any questions attendees would have in relation to policing issues.

The Chairman acknowledged the work that police officers carried out every day to protect the community they serve and in particular an officer which had been injured recently in Lisburn whilst responding to an incident. On behalf of the PCSP he wished the officer a speedy recovery.

1. Apologies

Apologies for non-attendance were reported on behalf of Councillors R Carlin, M Guy and A McIntyre, together with Superintendent J Mullan, PSNI, G Clifton, NIFRS, F McKibbin, PBNi and Independent Members D McBurney, Y Craig and P Yellamaty.

2. Presentations on Antisocial Behaviour

2.1 Street Pastors

Representatives of the Street Pastors organisation explained that they had been formed in April 2019 and were part of a family of projects which connected churches to society, and sought to care, listen and help. They gave an overview of the work their volunteers carried out every Saturday evening, in the Lisburn and Castlereagh areas. They pointed out that they work in partnership with the Council and the Police Service for Northern Ireland to build relationships with the community by carrying out a number of activities, such as:

- Lifting bottles/glasses
- Help to transport individuals home safely
- Provide Street Pastors' contact cards to young people
- First Aid
- Combat Antisocial behaviour
- Signpost people to help (agency referrals)

It was explained that the group acted as a buffer between young people and the police, often diffusing situations before they escalated into something more serious. A number of recent examples were provided on the work carried out by the Street Pastors team, such as locating a missing person, first aid provision and making the area safer via the removal of dangerous items.

A number of members expressed their gratitude to the Street Pastors team for the positive impact which their service had on the local community.

After discussion, during which the representatives answered a range of questions which had been posed by Members, the Partnership noted the information provided and the Chairman thanked the team for their presentation.

2.2 Dreamscheme

Mrs G Conroy joined the meeting during consideration of this item of business (7.35pm).

Dreamscheme representatives delivered a presentation detailing their longer-term youth projects which they delivered throughout the Belfast, Lisburn and Antrim areas, which sought to reduce antisocial and risk-taking behaviour and to increase confidence in the PSNI.

2.2 Dreamscheme (Cont'd)

The presenters indicated that funding provided by PCSP enabled Dreamscheme to provide support in three core strands:

- Street Work- focused on hot spots particularly during school holidays
- Mentoring Programmes- delivered in schools via classroom based learning and mentoring sessions to focus on behavioural and attendance issues and mental health needs of students. The presenters reported that, on average, 33 young people had attended, on a weekly basis, Dreamscheme's 12 week mentoring programme, which had provided many benefits such as increased school attendance and better student concentration with families also reporting positive feedback on behavioural issues.
- Group Programmes- afterschool drop in provision and evening programmes tailored to the needs in that area, such as; arts, sports and drama programmes.

They outlined the challenges that had been faced in trying to become established within the Four Winds area, with finding a suitable venue being the major barrier identified. They referred to the success of two recent pop-up sports days during the summer months which had attracted an excellent attendance by the youth in that area. They reported also that there were plans to establish an afterschool drop in centre and youth academy for sports to build on the success of the summer programme.

They then outlined the work being progressed in the Breda area, advising that their centre was open three afternoons and two evenings each week, with the sessions being regularly attended by 28 young people. They provided the meeting with example of a group of young people that had been previously involved in antisocial behaviour. Their involvement with Dreamscheme, through a trip to Portugal and engagement in team building activities, which had included a number of site visits in conjunction with police officers, had resulted in a greater confidence and respect for the police amongst the young people. It was reported that the youth involved were all doing much better academically and that three boys in particular wished to get involved in volunteering for Dreamscheme in the future. The presenters explained that funding had made a significant difference in these young people's lives.

Representatives then responded to a number of questions in relation to the work of Dreamscheme, its volunteers and the challenges they faced in establishing new areas within the community, particularly in recruiting volunteers, accessing funding and venues.

The Chairman thanked the Dreamscheme representatives for their presentation.

3. Presentation by representatives of Lisburn & Castlereagh Youth Council

The Youth Council representatives provided an overview of their work to date. They advised the meeting that they consisted of a group of young people from the Lisburn and Castlereagh Council areas with ages ranging between 16-19 years old. It was explained that their main aim was to make positive changes for young people in their area.

3. Presentation by representatives of Lisburn & Castlereagh Youth Council (Cont'd)

Examples were provided on the consultative work which the Youth Council had been engaged in throughout the year, which included completing surveys for the PSNI and involvement in reviewing Lisburn and Castlereagh City Council's Safeguarding Policy.

It was further advised that in the coming months the Youth Council planned to begin the following youth campaigns which would include research with their peers:

- Sexual Health Education / Relationships
- Transport Systems within Lisburn / Castlereagh
- Mental Health Awareness
- Employment Rights for Young People

A number of Members paid tribute to the Youth Council for the work which they had undertaken within the Council area.

In response to a number of questions, representatives outlined the challenges they had faced in recruiting representatives within each district electoral area and the improvements they had implemented to address that issue. This had included alternating venues between Lisburn and Dundonald, promoting the Youth Council throughout schools and other youth organisations and enhanced access to transport.

They concluded by providing examples of how being involved in the Youth Council had positively impacted upon their lives, reporting an increase in self-esteem, confidence and public speaking skills, as well as meeting new people/making friends.

The Chairman commended the group for their positive work to date and thanked them for their presentation.

4. Chief Inspector Update

The Chief Inspector thanked the three groups for the valued work within the community and reiterated how important working in partnership was to the police.

He confirmed that there had been a reduction in antisocial behaviour, however, with Christmas approaching an increase in retail crime was expected.

He then invited questions.

4.1 PSNI Action on Antisocial Behaviour
Councillor M Gregg

In response to a question from Councillor M Gregg, the Chief Inspector indicated that, whilst volunteer groups such as Dreamscheme and Street Pastors were very useful in engaging with youth people to diffuse situations, he explained that, where criminality was suspected, police officers would become involved and investigate situations that were drawn to their attention.

The Chief Inspector encouraged the public to report criminal offences via 101 at the time they occurred to enable an investigating officer to follow up. He also advised that reporting issues gave valuable information to police which could then be used to inform patrols of antisocial hot spots.

4.2 Antisocial Behaviour – Harassment of Residents
Member of the Public

A member of the public referred to ongoing harassment most evenings around 9pm where youths were banging on her door, causing noise disturbance and antisocial behaviour. She indicated that she had reported the issues to the PSNI on multiple occasions but the matter remained un-resolved.

Chief Inspector McCormick undertook to investigate the matter and agreed to discuss the issues raised with the member of the public after the meeting.

4.3 Public Attendance at PCSP Meetings
Member of the Public

In response to a question by a member of the public, Members acknowledged that attendance at public meetings had declined post Covid. The PCSP Manager provided the meeting with an overview of the publicity measures in place to encourage public attendance at meetings, which included adverts in papers, social media publicity and meeting notifications issued to schools/community groups and community associations.

The Chairman acknowledged that officers continued to work hard to increase and commended them for their efforts.

Conclusion of the Meeting

The Chairman thanked all those present for attending and extended thanks to the PSNI officers present and Council officials for their continued hard work and wished all attendees a safe journey home.

There being no further business, the meeting ended at 8:32 pm.

Chairman