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The Board is an independent body made up of 19 Members to ensure for all the people of Northern Ireland the delivery of an effective, efficient, accountable and impartial police service which will secure the confidence of the whole community by reducing crime and the fear of crime. **Click here** to see the Board membership.

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Custody Visiting Conference



Policing Board Chair addresses the Custody Visiting Annual Conference.

The Independent Custody Visitors got a break from visiting police custody suites at their recent Annual Conference. Each year, the visitors take time out to focus on the issues they are faced with on visits and the conference particularly focused on vulnerable detainees.

Last year, Custody Visitors in Northern Ireland made 468 visits to police custody - more than any other area in the UK except for Scotland and West Yorkshire.

Custody Visitors are normally appointed for a 6 year period only yet some of the 12 volunteers saying goodbye this year stayed on for a further year to assist the Board.

Speaking about the scheme Policing Board Chair Anne Connolly described it as an important part of the confidence building process in Northern Ireland, ensuring that systems are fair and impartial and that everyone is assured their rights are protected. She said its success is testament to the enthusiasm and professionalism of the Custody Visitors who make visits in their own time. She said:

FRONT COVER CAPTION

Director General of the National Crime Agency Lynne Owens presents her report to the Policing Board.



C/Supt Simon Walls, Policing Board Chair Anne Connolly and Board Member Brice Dickson at the Custody Visiting Annual Conference.

I know that sometimes visits can be difficult, that Custody Visitors see many people in distressed dispositions and the challenges this poses for PSNI. Custody Visitors are the Board's eyes and ears when visiting PSNI detention facilities. I know that it is not a role taken up lightly and want to offer my thanks for all the hard work put into the Scheme.

Roadsafe Roadshow - don't learn the hard way

Policing Board Vice Chair Debbie Watters helped launch the Roadsafe Roadshow in Belfast last month. The Roadshow brings together all the emergency services to tell the real time story of what happens after a collision, what their roles and responses are and importantly, how it affects all those involved in a human way.

The Roadshow Roadsafe is particularly geared towards young people to get them thinking about the potential dangers of driving as they start out and with 16 young people killed on our roads last year, the message is a vital one. The message, though, is meaningful at any age.

Ms Watters said:

“The Roadsafe Roadshow is an ideal vehicle to get a stark and blunt message across to young people that driving can be extremely dangerous.

We all need to be reminded that just one slip of concentration can end up in a collision. This message is particularly important for young people to hear so that they are aware of the dangers as they begin to drive and not learn this lesson the hard way. ”

Head of PSNI Road Policing, Chief Inspector Diane Pennington said that the key to reducing the number of young people killed and seriously injured on our roads is education.



Actors convey the aftermath of a road collision with real members of the emergency services.

She said:

“I hope that after seeing the roadshow they realise that they are not indestructible; that they are more vulnerable on the roads and that they must respect the roads and other road users.” ”



Pictured at the Roadsafe Roadshow are (l-r): Sgt Robert Cumiskey, Insp Rosie Leech, Con John Wilson PSNI Roads Education Officer, Policing Board Vice Chair Debbie Watters, John McPoland NI Ambulance Service, Rory Domigan NIFRS, John Amos NI Ambulance Service, Eastern Area Watch Commander Trevor McClurg and Con Stephen Dickson.

Board Meeting News

Opening the October Board Meeting in Public Board Chair Anne Connolly welcomed the Director General of the National Crime Agency (NCA) to her second public engagement with Board Members. Commenting that the NCA has now been successfully operating and supporting the PSNI for over a year, Mrs Connolly thanked the Agency for its work with the Board over the last number of months.

The Chair also congratulated police on recent operational successes including terrorist-related arrests and the find of a primed device which has undoubtedly saved lives.

In his report, to Board Members the Chief Constable also welcomed the NCA Director General's attendance at the meeting, emphasising the close working relationship the PSNI has established with the Agency, allowing them to avail of additional expertise and resources



Lynne Owens presents her report to Board Members during the meeting.

in the wider fight against serious and organised crime. He added that this collaborative approach has seen successful prosecutions against those involved in Child Sexual Exploitation, cybercrime and financial crime.

Providing a financial update to Board Members the Chief Constable explained the significant impact potential cuts of 3% and 6% on next

year's budget would have on the PSNI's capacity and capability. He also emphasised the challenges ahead within an uncertain financial climate and the need for Board input and support.

[click here](#) 

to view the Chief Constable's report to Board Members

Driving change



Collaborative working is the key to delivering road safety says the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland. His recently published inspection report Driving Change calls for statutory organisations to work more closely together to change driver behaviour, particularly when sharing information on penalty points and disqualifications cross border.

As part of the recommendations, Chief Inspector Brendan McGuigan advocates a centralised Traffic Court, similar to the English system, which frees up bureaucracy, time and resources by hearing uncontested or guilty plea cases with the defendant or prosecutor present.

To find out more about the recommendations in the Driving Change report

[click here](#) 

Continued...

Board Meeting News continued

Report from NCA Director General

In her report to the Board Lynne Owens, NCA Director General spoke of the Agency's commitment to a close working relationship with the PSNI and other operational partners in the fight against serious and organised crime.

Updating Members on the progress of the investigation into the National Assets Management Agency (NAMA) which commenced in July 2015 she explained that of the seven people interviewed under criminal caution six of them remain under investigation and criminal suspects. Having interviewed more than 40 witnesses, eight searches of property have been conducted and investigators have obtained Court Orders to obtain materials from public and private institutions.

Assuring Board Members that the investigation is a high priority operation on the UK Serious and Organised Crime grid, Lynne Owens outlined its remit as:

- the actual NAMA NI loan book purchase and dispersal of fees offshore;
- the nature, extent and probity of the relationships and roles of persons involved in the process, including allegations of corruption.
- the broader NAMA NI loan book portfolio sale process, including previous purchase attempts and;
- offences suspected of having been committed under UK law.

The Director General also confirmed that the Finance Minister recently received a confidential briefing on the progress of the investigation and that since July 2015 the NCA has provided



three confidential briefings to the Assembly's Finance Committee.

Lynne Owens also outlined operational successes during July and August which has involved five disruptions (one moderate and four minor), including the arrest of an individual for possession of indecent images of children and the conviction and sentencing of an offender on a drugs operation.



to view the NCA Director General's report

Questions to the NCA Director General

Lynne Owens was asked by Board Members to outline the implications of Brexit on NCA/PSNI operations. She explained that, as yet, there was no impact on operational relationships across Europe but going forward, both the NCA and PSNI needed to be confident that intelligence would continue to be shared via Europol or another route.

Given the additionality that comes with 'Fresh Start', Lynne Owens was also asked to advise on the new integration of the NCA with the PSNI in relation to cross border work and also on organised crime gangs. Answering the Director General told Members that 'Fresh Start' presents a real and tangible opportunity to build capability and capacity which is directly shared and co-located. This will allow live-time sharing of intelligence and will take the activity to dismantle these groups to a new level.

Continued...

Board Meeting News continued

Questions to the Chief Constable

Due to recent anti-social behaviour experienced during Fresher's Week in the Holyland area of South Belfast, the Chief Constable was asked if there are potential powers at the disposal of the police such as anti-social behaviour orders that could be used to tackle such issues. ACC Stephen Martin told Members that to date 13 people* have been arrested in relation to disturbances in the area. He also cautioned against the introduction of new powers as he believed the range of powers currently available to the police are sufficient. ACC Martin also emphasised that the situation was more about problem solving and that positive engagements with young people had also taken place during the week.

The Chief Constable was also asked if Operation Exposure, which is running on the PSNI Craigavon's Facebook page and involves posting one CCTV image a day of someone who the police want to identify and speak to in relation to various matters, is adhering to the guidelines set.

ACC Martin assured Members that the policy has been equality screened, the PSNI Human Rights Advisor was highly involved in its development and that all other lines of enquiry were exhausted before deciding to post an image on Facebook. He also reported that to date there had been 12 successful identifications out of 16. The challenge of identifying the age of young people before exposing their image publically was also raised and the need to put in place extra safe guards to ensure that those underage are not identified in this way.

Other questions included recent research published by Cambridge University on Body Worn Video and how the findings compare to PSNI stats; the police response to the removal of paramilitary flags and emblems; prioritising young male victims of violent crime; and the position with the PSNI investigation on the Omagh bomb investigation.



The Chief Constable and NCA Director General being questioned at the October Board Meeting in Public.

Police College Review Update

At the September meeting, the Board were informed of the terms of the independently led review of the Police College and a copy of the completed report has now been received. The Review focuses on five areas: Content of the Student Officer Programme; Culture within the Police

College; Verification of examinations and assessments; Accreditation and relationship with the Ulster University; and Benchmarking.

Board Members have agreed to convene a special meeting on Thursday 20 October to consider the findings in detail.

*figures correct 6/10/16

Continued...

Board Meeting News continued

Focus on Police Performance

During the meeting, the Chief Constable was also questioned on the mid-year police performance against the Policing Plan 2016/17 targets. While tackling crime against older people, reducing the number of statute barred cases and reducing the average working days lost for police officers has improved, the outcome rates for hate crime and road traffic detection has decreased.

The Chief Constable was asked to explain the reasons for the decrease in outcomes relating to road safety. Acknowledging that this was a cause for concern, ACC Alan Todd told Members that the decrease was due to a number of factors, one being the restructuring of the Road Policing Unit which has resulted in a reduction of police officers involved in road safety. While a business case is ongoing to acquire new equipment, current aging road detection equipment was also cited as an issue, in particular for low light and rural use. The 51% cut to Departmental advertising and road

safety promotions budgets last year has also had an impact and it was agreed that there was a need to be more streamlined and creative, particularly in educating young people about safer driving on the roads.

During the meeting the Chief Constable reported recent successful drug operations which have resulted in the seizure of £2.7m worth of drugs. Despite these successes the performance report shows that drug seizures have decreased by 13.1% between April and August compared to the same period last year. Following on from the report the Chief Constable was asked about the level of heroin use in the North. In his response ACC Kerr acknowledged that growing anecdotal, community and some seizure evidence indicates that the level of heroin use has increased. He also explained that the two main reasons for this are the emergence and exploitation by Eastern European organised crime gangs and the change in drug use which is showing people going directly to heroin use, because of its accessibility, as opposed to graduated use starting with softer drugs.

Deeply concerned about the increase in heroin use and the impact of this on both physical and mental health, ACC Kerr confirmed that he has met with the Department of Health Permanent Secretary to move this serious issue forward. He also told Members that support from the NCA in providing a broader international intelligence picture is also assisting in preventing the threat and supply of this hard drug in Northern Ireland.

[click here](#)
to view the full six-monthly performance report against the Policing Plan 2016/17.

[click here](#)
to view footage of the meeting.

[click here](#)
to view the list of written questions

Resolution at Ardoyne welcomed

During the meeting Board Chair Anne Connolly welcomed the resolution of the long running dispute involving a parade in the Ardoyne area. She said:

“As a Board we are grateful to the successful efforts of Rev Harold Good and Jim Roddy for facilitating discussion and agreement to the dispute. The parading and community representatives are to be praised for their willingness to engage in dialogue and work to find resolution. We hope that the positive end to this matter signals the beginning of further discussions to find future resolution where there is contention.”

Also welcoming the outcome Chief Constable George Hamilton said:

“The peaceful conclusion to the longstanding Twaddell protest is another example of what can be achieved when the community themselves takes a lead in delivering for their safety and wellbeing. Police worked closely with all of those involved and contributed significant resources to the weekend. I would like to thank them for their dedication and effort throughout.”

Recognising heroism

Some of the heroism inherent in everyday policing was honoured recently in the annual South Area Recognition ceremony. Policing Board Chair Anne Connolly presented two officers with Royal Humane Society certificates for an act of heroism and officers and staff were commended for good examples of police work in the line of duty.

Acknowledging the extra mile that many officers bring to their role each day, Mrs Connolly said:

There are not many people who can say they've saved a person's life of a day; there aren't many of us who can clock off work content in the knowledge that they have taken a huge consignment of drugs out of circulation and there aren't many of us who put their feet up knowing they have been somebody's hero that day.

She added:

Of course, we often hear more about what goes wrong in policing: who didn't call to our door in time, who didn't tackle the anti-social



Pictured (l-r) are: C/Supt Pauline Shields, Policing Board Chair Anne Connolly and ACC Stephen Martin at the South Area Recognition ceremony.

behaviour on our doorstep and, who insisted on giving us that ticket! We are very aware that the choice to go out to protect the public, keep people safe and protect the community is often not an easy one. The policing environment in Northern Ireland continues to be challenging and carrying out such an important role in the context of a continued threat is sometimes difficult.

But we also know how rewarding it is to be a police officer; it's one of those roles where you actually get to make a difference to people's lives and to communities as a whole.



National Police Memorial Day

London's St Paul's Cathedral was the setting for this year's National Police Memorial Day which honours and remembers the thousands of police officers who have lost their lives serving the community. Policing Board Chair Anne Connolly was joined at the event by PSNI Chief Constable George Hamilton and the Justice Minister Claire Sugden.

Policing across the border

A revised Cross Border Policing Strategy has been published which is designed to enhance cross border cooperation in policing and tackle cross border organised crime.



TALK it out



The Policing Board's second TALK Programme will continue to run until the end of March 2017. The Transformation, Advocacy, Leadership, Knowledge is designed to support emerging young leaders across the community and encourage them to engage with the Board on how views and perceptions of policing are shaped. The participants of the current Programme are all Independent Members of the various PCSPs.

The Board recently held a review event with partners from the PSNI and United States Consul examining how effective the TALK Programme has been and how to making best use of these experiences in the future.

The study visit to Washington in August 2015 based around a programme delivered by the US Institute of Peace which focused on negotiation, conflict resolution and civic leadership skills stood out as a significant learning tool. Participants also benefitted from the cross border trip which identified best practice and alternative ways of working.

Participants also welcomed the chance to build trust and relationships with the police and benefit from the mutually supportive relationships between the TALK Programme participants.

Committee briefed on PSNI workforce demand



Resources Committee Members being briefed by DCC Harris and C/Supt Farrar on PSNI work force demand

The Resources Committee was recently briefed by Deputy Chief Constable Drew Harris and C/Supt Peter Farrar on the PSNI Demand Profiling Project which is being undertaken across the whole organisation. During the session DCC Harris provided an overview of the project outlining the three phase approach which involves: an initial measurement of demand; the resource requirements for demand; and prioritisation of services and resources.

He said that 20% of the 500,000 calls for service received per year are crime related, and while year on year reported crimes tend to stay in and around 100,000, the types of crimes are changing. DCC Harris also assured Members that the project

will identify more clearly the internal and other criminal justice demands on policing and any hidden demands.

Discussions focused on the numerous incidents of assault that officers have to deal with on a regular basis at Hospital A&E Departments and, for example, Muckamore Hospital in Antrim and how these are categorised. DCC Harris was also questioned on how the PSNI respond to missing persons, in particular young people in care. While understanding the necessity for police involvement, it was agreed that more collaboration was needed with other agencies to better use resources in these situations.

The first phase of the report will be completed this month and detailed first findings will be presented to Members at the November Committee meeting.