



## Belfast City Council

**Report to:** Strategic Policy and Resources Committee

**Subject:** **Amalgamation of Sstaff Tteams to Support the Community Safety Partnership -and the District Policing Partnership**

**Date:** 21<sup>st</sup> August 2009

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### Relevant Background Information

Members will be aware that the Council's contribution to a Safer City is achieved through its leadership role in both the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and District Policing Partnership (DPP) as well as through the delivery of services by a number of departments. Members have previously expressed concerns that there is considerable duplication between the work of both partnerships and consider that there should be a more integrated approach.

Earlier this year, the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) Minister, Paul Goggins, consulted key stakeholders requesting views on the future delivery of the functions of both partnerships.

The current roles of each partnership are described below:

- **The Belfast District Policing Partnership**

The District Policing Partnership (DPP) consists of a Principal DPP and four geographically based sub groups. The DPP, which is made up of both Elected and Independent Members, has statutory responsibility for community engagement on policing issues, gaining the co-operation of the public with the police in preventing crime and in monitoring the performance of the police against the targets included in the Annual and Local Policing Plans. The Northern Ireland Policing Board provides for 75% of approved expenditure incurred by the DPP which consists mostly of Members' allowances and staff salaries. There is also provision for the advertising and holding of a significant number of public meetings to monitor police performance and a small amount to support local initiatives. In the 2008/09 financial year, the total contribution from the Policing Board was £383,000.

- **The Community Safety Partnership**

The Belfast Community Safety Partnership (CSP) brings together representatives from various agencies and sectors to work collectively on the delivery of programmes to help make communities safer. Each of the political parties is represented. The CSP is working to an agreed Safer Belfast Plan for 2009–2011, which prioritises four main themes: tackling anti-social behaviour; reducing alcohol fuelled violent crime; dealing with hate crime; and helping Belfast feel safer. The Council receives some funding from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) on behalf of the CSP which currently includes £380,000 for programme work and £123,000 for staff per year (secured until end of March 2011). Partner agencies also make some contributions to particular programmes.

At its meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009, the Committee agreed an interim response to the NIO consultation, which stated that it is in agreement with the principle of creating fully integrated partnerships post 2011 and on taking steps as soon as possible to more closely align the work and approaches of CSPs and DPPs. Subsequently, on 22<sup>nd</sup> May, it agreed its more detailed response, which is attached in Appendix 1.

In addition, a Safer City workshop was held for Members on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at which a discussion took place on the steps which could be taken to more closely align the work of the two partnerships prior to 2011. There was general consensus around the following issues:

- The CSP/DPP staff should be brought together under one Service and management structure; and
- Further work should be carried out and agreed through the political system to better align the work and outcomes of both partnerships.

### **Key Issues**

The Minister has now written to the Chief Executive and to the chairs of both the CSP and DPP, thanking them for their response and outlining the general nature of all of the responses received. A copy of this letter and the accompanying document are attached ~~as in~~ Appendices 2(a) and 2(b)~~2~~.

The letter outlines that there is clear support for bringing the current CSP and DPP functions together into a single partnership post RPA. Concerns expressed reflected the fact that:

- There should not be a dilution of the existing arrangements for ensuring that the police are accountable to their local communities; and
- Proposals and future frameworks need to take account of the developing Community Planning frameworks.

A new working group has been set up to take the review forward into the next stage and to propose potential future models and working arrangements. However the documentation from the Minister (Appendices 2(a) and 2(b)) also requires that by the Autumn, each Council should be working to achieve the following:

- Sharing of information between the partnerships;
- Reciprocal reporting arrangements (for each partnership to notify the other of its main activities and outcomes);
- Identification of joint projects for collaboration;
- Some members of CSP attending DPP meetings and vice-a-versa.
- Sharing processes for priority setting to assist the development of future local policing plans;
- Shared public engagement events;

Some of the above joint working arrangements have already been put in place in Belfast, but a small number will also require further discussions with the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Community Safety Unit at the NIO to ensure that these can be achieved whilst allowing both Partnerships to meet their agreed targets and timescales and that any necessary changes can be made to the Code of Practice with regard to this and to holding meetings in public. It is proposed that bringing the two staff teams supporting the CSP and DPP together would serve as an essential step in achieving this more joined up approach.

It is therefore proposed that the staff providing support to the DPP move to be co-located with the Community Safety Team and that both teams of staff are managed within the Environmental Health Service. The advantages of doing this would be that it could facilitate:

- Less duplication of work and roles;
- More sharing of resources;
- A single point of contact for all safer city issues;
- Sharing of information;
- More joint projects;
- A joined up approach to planning and much more of a connection between the issues raised at DPP meetings and projects and services delivered via the community safety team and the NIO funding for CSP programmes;
- Fewer meetings;
- A more joined up approach to community engagement;
- A greater input by elected representatives into the work of the CSP;
- Single consultation exercises.

## **Resource Implications**

### **Finance**

There would be no staff costs associated with this move.

### **Human Resources**

Discussions will now take place with the relevant stakeholders including the Trade Unions. However as changes to DPP staff duties are not required, it is envisaged that implementation of the changes would be achieved through 'badging' of the existing DPP unit and related posts to the Environmental Health Service structure. The job description of the new Safer City Manager Post can accommodate management of the DPP team.

### **Assets**

In addition, the ongoing accommodation plans can ensure that space is provided for co-location of the teams in the Cecil Ward Building, once some decanting has occurred in the Autumn.

## **Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to agree that steps are taken to amalgamate the CSP and DPP teams, including:

- The re-badging of posts within the DPP Unit to the Environmental Health Service structure with the DPP manager reporting to the Safer City Manager post, as soon as agreement of the Council is reached; and

- The staff team of the DPP moving to be co-located with the CSP team in the Cecil Ward Building as soon as the accommodation becomes available, following the move of some work units back to the City Hall;
- Authorising officers to enter into detailed discussions with the Northern Ireland Policing Board and the Community Safety Unit at the NIO in respect of the impact on current expectations, targets and codes of practice. .

The Committee is also asked to agree the proposed management arrangements as the management side position and that if no written objections are received from the Unions, that we can proceed directly to implementation stage without further referral back to Committee.

#### **Documents Attached**

[Appendix 1 Detailed Council Response to the NIO Consultation Document: Local Partnership Working on Policing and Community Safety; a way forward.](#)

[Appendix 2\(a\) Letter ~~and accompanying document~~ from Minister Goggins.](#)

[Appendix 2\(b\) Summary of Responses](#)

#### **Decision Tracking**

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Further update reports on progress towards better aligning the work of the DPPs and CSPs will be brought back to Strategic Policy and Resources Committee by the Head of Environmental Health and the Head of Committee and Members' Services, as appropriate.