



Belfast City Council

Report to:	Strategic Policy and Resources Committee
Subject:	Consultation Response on Police and Community Safety Partnerships
Date:	23 September 2011
Reporting Officer:	Suzanne Wylie, Director, Health and Environmental Services, ext 3260
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1	Relevant Background Information
1.1	As Members are aware, Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) will be established as new statutory bodies under the Justice Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 and should be in place by April 2012.
1.2	To move this process forward the Department of Justice (DOJ) is consulting on the implementation of PCSPs and has asked for responses on 3 key areas in this consultation, namely: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Details of what should be contained in the code of practice for the operation of PCSPs (and in the case of Belfast, District Police and Community Safety Partnerships);2. Processes for the designation of statutory bodies on the partnership;3. A Draft Code of Practice on the appointment of Independent Members
1.3	Party group briefings were held in August in order to formulate a response for approval at the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in September. The draft response to the consultation is attached as Appendix 1. It should be noted that DOJ has agreed to consider the Committee's response following this meeting, despite the fact that the original deadline was 13 th September 2011. the full consultation can be found at www.dojni.gov.uk/...consultations/...consultations/consultation_on_the_implementation_of_pcsp-2.pdf
1.4	The Committee should also note that a further report on the new PCSP structure will be brought to the October meeting of the Committee, asking for a decision on the number of members who should sit on the PCSP and also the process for making political nominations to be made to the partnerships.

2	Key Issues
2.1	There is recognition by all parties that the existing processes surrounding the functions of the DPP are bureaucratic for both Members and officers. There was a general consensus that resources, both financial and human, should as far as possible be used for local service delivery to tackle community safety issues and effective engagement at community level.

2.2	<p>Draft Response – Summary A draft response is provided at Appendix A. the key issues highlighted Include:</p>
2.2.1	<p>Belfast Code of Practice – We are proposing that, due to the unique make up of Belfast, there should be a separate code of practice and that the code should take the form of a flexible framework, with an outline only of roles and responsibilities, good practice guidelines and minimal reporting requirements. This would mean that the detailed procedures could be developed locally.</p>
2.2.2	<p>Administrative procedures - We strongly recommend a significant shift from the mandatory / formal requirements of the existing Code Of Practice (COP) to a more flexible and locally determined approach which will allow local partnerships to assign the bulk of their resources to tackling ASB, crime and community safety issues, rather than resources being over committed to administrative functions.</p>
2.2.3	<p>Local communities – The response proposes that local communities are at the core of the new partnership arrangements. It is therefore essential that the Belfast Code of Practice facilitates a locally determined relationship with communities which is responsive and provides effective service delivery at a local level. We recommend that arrangements for local engagement, allocation of funds, monitoring of functions / plans and management of meetings etc is left to the discretion of councils and local partnerships.</p>
2.2.4	<p>Allowances – The fact that the legislation does not include any reference to payment of allowances (just out of pocket expenses) has caused concern among some parties. A number of those points are highlighted below:</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The potential to reduce the number of people applying to become independent members is likely to lead to a reduction in the range and quality of the pool of candidates and could ultimately affect ongoing participation. ▪ The principle that membership should be reflective of the community and representative of the local political parties could be undermined. ▪ Money saved from not paying allowances should be passed back to the PCSP for investing in programmes.
2.2.5	<p>Role of Principal Policing Committee –Clarity is sought on the relationship between the Principal Policing Committee and local Policing Committees. This is something which caused a problem with the current arrangements and the opportunity should be taken o rectify this in the future. More detail is provided in the Appendix.</p>
2.2.6	<p>Review of partnerships - In order to ensure there is effective local service delivery for communities we have asked that there is flexibility in relation to the operational and administration of partnerships and that there is scope for a review of regional and local codes of practice / frameworks to allow for improvements / changes to be made after the partnerships are in operation. Such a review should be carried out after 18 months;</p>
2.3	<p>Potential to Pay Chairs Allowances There may be a possibility of paying chairs of the partnerships a special responsibility allowance, but this would require sanction from the Department of the Environment to raise the current cap on these payments and would also have to come from Council funds. If the Council wished to pursue this approach the Committee would need to write to the DOE to request that this is done.</p>
2.4	<p>DOJ / NILGA Workshop A workshop is being held in Craigavon Civic Centre on 28th September 2011 from 9.30am – 2.00 pm to discuss the implementation plans for the new partnership. Belfast City Council has been invited to send four Members and one officer.</p>

3	Resource Implications
3.1	The future funding from the DOJ and the NIPB will need to be agreed via the Joint Committee. During this transitional year (2011/2012) both partners have agreed the same level of funding as last year. Future funding proposals have still to be agreed.
3.2	It should also be noted that there is no provision within the new Partnership arrangements to pay an allowance to Members, either elected or independent, for attendance at meetings of the partnerships. Out of pocket expenses will be paid.

4	Equality Implications
	None

5	Recommendations
5.1	<p>The Committee is asked to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Approve the draft response attached as Appendix 1; ▪ Agree that the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Committee, the Chair of the Principal DPP (or their nominees) and another Member from a different political party attend the DOJ / NILGA workshop on 28th September. ▪ Consider whether it wishes a letter to be sent to the DOE asking for the Special Responsibility Allowance threshold to be increased to enable chairpersons of the partnerships to be paid an allowance.

	Key to Abbreviations
District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (or PCSPs) District Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (or DPCSPs) Department of Justice (DoJ) Department of the Environment (DOE)	

	Appendices
1. Draft response to consultation 2. Updated Diagram of proposed Belfast structures	

	Decision tracking
The Director of Health and Environmental Services will bring a report back on the new PCSP structure will be brought to the October meeting of the Committee, asking for a decision on the number of members who should sit on the PCSP and also the process for making political nominations to be made to the partnerships.	