



## Belfast City Council

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| <b>Report to:</b>         | Strategic Policy and Resources Committee               |
| <b>Subject:</b>           | Draft Response to NIO Consultation on CSPs and DPPs    |
| <b>Date:</b>              | 22 <sup>nd</sup> May 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. The current roles of each partnership are described below:

- **The 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 budget for the DPP was £511,000 of which the Council contributed £128,000.

- **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 has recently agreed a 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 to help Belfast feel safer. The Council receives funding from the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) on behalf of the CSP of £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.

On 20<sup>th</sup> March 2009, the Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice issued a consultation document on the future of CSPs and DPPs - '*Local Partnership Working on Policing and Community Safety: a way forward*', inviting initial comments on the general principles detailed in the paper by the end of April, with an extended timeframe to the end of May for more detailed comments.

At its meeting of 24<sup>th</sup> April 2009, the Committee agreed an interim response to the NIO, which stated that it is in agreement with the principle of creating fully integrated partnerships in the longer term and on taking steps as soon as possible to more closely align the work and approaches of CSPs and DPPs.

## **Key Issues**

### **Safer City Workshop**

A Safer City Workshop for members was held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2009 at which one of the topics discussed was the consultation document and 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:

- Support for the general principles contained in the consultation document (as described above);
- The CSP/DPP staff should be brought together under one Service and management structure; and
- A detailed proposal paper should be developed and agreed through the political system with actions to outline how to better align the work and outcomes of both partnerships. This could include joint public meetings, joint consultations, a clear communication line between the two partnerships, reviewing the Policing Board Code of Practice etc. and engaging the Transition Committee in discussions around rationalising community engagement structures in preparation for community planning.

### **Consultation on CSPs and DPPs**

In terms of the consultation document, the paper proposes that the NIO aims to have integrated partnerships combining all of the functions of the CSPs and DPPs in place to coincide with the changes to local government planned for the Spring of 2011, whilst acknowledging that the final decision on the shape of the integrated partnership will need to be taken in the devolved context by a local Minister. It also suggests that, once a vision is established on future arrangements for local partnership working, progress should be made on implementing interim measures to bring the two partnerships closer together, in anticipation of further integration in the future. The Consultation document is attached in Appendix 1.

A draft response, which includes comments under each of the questions posed in the consultation document is attached at Appendix 2. Both the Belfast Community Safety Partnership and the District Policing Partnership will be making individual responses.

## **Resource Implications**

None at this stage.

**Recommendations**

The Committee is asked to agree to the draft response to the NIO consultation document on CSPs and DPPs.

**Key to Abbreviations**

CSP - Community Safety Partnership

DPP – District Policing partnership

NIO – Northern Ireland Office

**Documents Attached**

1. NIO Consultation Document: Local Partnership Working on Policing and Community Safety; a way forward.
2. Draft Belfast City Council Response.

**Decision Tracking**

1. The Chief Executive will bring forward a report to the Strategic Policy and Resources Committee in the near future outlining proposals for bringing the staff of the DPP and CSP together in one Service;
2. Further update reports on progress on 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.

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