



## Belfast City Council

<b>Report to:</b>	Strategic Policy & Resources Committee
<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Response to “Local Partnership Working on Policing &amp; Community Safety: A Consultation Paper”</b>
<b>Date:</b>	21 <sup>st</sup> May 2010
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### Relevant Background Information

The Department of Justice (formerly NIO) is currently undertaking a consultation on the future of Community Safety and District Policing Partnerships. The deadline for response is 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010.

The Community Safety and DPP teams within the Health & Environmental Services Department have been coordinating consultation on the proposals on behalf of Belfast City Council and the attached report (Appendix 1) is now being brought before members of committee for their consideration.

In Belfast consultation has taken place with the following:

- Belfast District Policing Partnership – Principal Partnership, North, South, East & West Sub-groups
- Belfast Community Safety Partnership – Strategic & Operational Tiers
- Chairman of Belfast District Policing Partnership
- Chairman of Belfast Community Safety Partnership
- Sinn Fein Party Group, Belfast City Council
- DUP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- UUP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- SDLP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- Alliance Party Group, Belfast City Council
- PUP Party Group, Belfast City Council
- Belfast City Council Inter-Departmental Policy Officers Group

Consultation took the form of:

- Party Group briefings
- Individual briefing sessions
- Partnership meetings
- A joint CSP and DPP consultation event
- Email circulation for comment to members of the CSP and Council departments.

## Key Issues

**Aim of the Consultation:** To seek views on the best way to deliver the functions of Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) and District Policing Partnerships (DPPs) in the future through a single partnership.

**Rationale:** CSPs and DPPs were set up as separate structures with specific, but complementary functions, in 2003 after a Criminal Justice Review. This was considered to be the best arrangement at the time, considering the political climate that existed.

CSPs are largely seen to deliver initiatives on the ground to reduce crime, anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime, while the DPPs ensure local engagement and accountability for how policing is delivered. These partnerships have generally worked very well but there is an emerging consensus that the time is now right to bring the functions of CSPs and DPPs together and it is suggested that they should be delivered by a single partnership.

There are a number of reasons that the NIO (now DOJ) believe that a single partnership is the best way forward:

1. Taking a more joined-up approach will result in better local delivery , accountability and engagement
2. Single partnerships should also complement the introduction of community planning
3. By streamlining the administration and overheads involved, we should be able to make better use of the resources available for partnership working by directing more of the funding to initiatives on the ground.

While this review is not in itself a cost-cutting exercise, the NIO (now DOJ) believes that it is vital that the new arrangements provide good value for money. At present, CSPs administrative costs account for approximately £1.15m (35%) out of their total budget of £3.28m, and approximately £3.5m (85%) out of the total budget of £4.1m for DPPs. The proposed new arrangements should facilitate a reduction in these overhead costs and enable more resources to be targeted at front line delivery.

**Role of the new Partnership:** In preparation for this public consultation, the NIO (NOW DOJ) has undertaken substantial engagement with a range of key stakeholders to test the practicability of amalgamating local partnerships and to ensure that the right issues were identified. This included a consultation in 2009 to which this Council made a response supporting better working arrangements between both partnerships.

The consultation recommends that the new partnership should:

- Not lose any of the functionality of the existing partnerships
- Join-up policing and community safety activities and be capable of aligning with broader arrangements at council level for community planning
- Facilitate meaningful public engagement by enhancing the involvement of local communities and responding to their concerns
- Deliver improved value for money and quality of service
- Positively promote equality of opportunity
- Give equal weight to the functions of accountability, delivery and engagement
- Ensure that the policing accountability function is not diluted
- Facilitate the sharing of best practice across Northern Ireland
- Focus on outcomes/solutions rather than activities/ analysis of problems
- Be capable of being easily understood by the public

**Recommended model:** While 3 models were considered within the consultation document, the NIO (now DOJ) has proposed one model for primary consideration as they believe it offers the correct balance in terms of joining up the functions currently delivered by CSPs and DPPs while retaining a distinct local police monitoring role. Model 2 also offers a pragmatic approach that is likely to be acceptable to all parties. Lastly, it recognises that the accountability arrangements are likely to remain complex as accountability for policing issues and community safety issues respectively fall to the Policing Board and the new Department of Justice.

The suggested model proposes a single Crime Reduction Partnership (name to be confirmed) incorporating a separate monitoring group on policing. The DoJ and the Northern Ireland Policing Board would jointly set regional priorities which would then be communicated to local councils. Councils would identify the local issues of concern for the Crime Reduction Partnership, which would be responsible for the development of a Partnership Plan to address these issues and for informing the Local Policing Plan. The Delivery Group (or Groups) would be responsible for the outworkings of the Partnership Plans. The local issues group or groups would support wider stakeholder and community engagement.

Other recommendations include:

- **Statutory Duties** – the NIO (now DOJ) would place a statutory duty on local councils to establish Crime Reduction Partnerships. The legislation would also carry across to the Policing Monitoring Group legislative duties that currently apply to District Policing Partnerships.
- **Membership** - The membership of the CRP would be drawn from four main areas:
  1. **Elected representatives** - nominated by Council proportionate to their party representation (*please note elected members would also be expected to sit on the Police Monitoring Group*)
  2. **Statutory organisations** – on invitation from Council to organisational representatives of an appropriate seniority
  3. **Community & voluntary sector** - which could include the business community and/or faith based organisations
  4. **Independent members** - who would be appointed by the Northern Ireland Policing Board (*please note independent members would also be expected to sit on the Police Monitoring Group*)

All sectors would be represented (possibly up to eight from each sector, not including the Partnership Chair) with the overall chair of the partnership to be agreed locally.

- **Accountability** - The Crime Reduction Partnership would be collectively accountable to the local council for delivery against the local Partnership Plan, and the council would in turn account to the DoJ for the Partnership's performance and how the council is exercising its statutory duties. The independent members and elected representatives (including the chair of the Crime Reduction Partnership) would, in addition to their role on the full partnership, form the separate Policing Monitoring Group. The Policing Monitoring Group would be responsible for monitoring the local police against achievement of the local policing plan and would be accountable to the Northern Ireland Policing Board, through the local council, for this specific area of work.

- **Public Engagement** - The local council would be required to set up a local forum, or fora (*the 'Local Issues Fora' in the proposed model*) which could subsume existing structures and engagement mechanisms - for the purposes of engaging with the public on the full range of issues to be addressed by the Crime Reduction Partnership, including policing matters. Depending on local circumstances, this could be on a thematic or geographic basis.
- **Delivery** - The Delivery Group(s) would be responsible for front-line delivery of the Partnership Plan objectives. The makeup and membership of this group would be left to the local Partnership to decide. The make-up of the Delivery Group could be based on a thematic or geographic basis and should, as far as possible, dovetail with, other local delivery mechanisms (for example, Neighbourhood Renewal). It should include members of the Crime Reduction Partnership with a specific knowledge or interest in the issue to be addressed and be led by a 'champion (s)' who would be responsible for reporting back to the main Partnership on progress and delivery. This advocate (s) would also lead the liaison between the Local Issues Forum (or fora) and the main Partnership for their respective theme.
- **Funding** - Funding would continue to be provided by both the DoJ and the Northern Ireland Policing Board, though both organisations will consider how to provide a more streamlined and consistent approach for accounting to each organisation for how this funding is used, with a greater focus on achieving positive social outcomes.

**Proposed Time scales:** The NIO (now DOJ) believes that there is a clear consensus to press ahead with planning for the introduction of single partnership arrangements, coterminous with the proposed new council boundaries in May 2011. However, the Department is aware of the uncertainty around RPA and they have indicated that they would still wish to see a single partnerships established by May 2011; even if RPA is not implemented at that time. This decision will be dependent on a number of factors including the approval by the new DOJ Minister.

### **Resource Implications**

#### Financial

None at present.

The DoJ and NIPB currently provide financial assistance to Belfast City Council to support the work of the DPP and CSP and other associated costs are included in annual revenue estimates. The consultation recommends that this is not a cost cutting exercise though it is hoped that the emerging structure would bring efficiencies.

#### Human Resources

At present the human resource implications of emerging recommendations are not known. However, work has already been undertaken to support the long-term integration of the CSP and DPP by bringing the two staff teams under the management of the Environmental Health Service.

#### Asset and Other Implications

N/A

**Recommendations**

It is recommended that the Committee considers and agrees the attached draft response.

**Decision Tracking**

The Director of Health and Environmental Services will ensure that the agreed response is submitted to the DoJ by 3<sup>rd</sup> June. She will also report back to the Committee on the outcome of the consultation and proposals for implementation at the appropriate time

**Key to Abbreviations**

NIO– Northern Ireland  
CSP – Community Safety Partnership  
DPP – District Policing Partnership  
NIPB – Northern Ireland Policing Board  
DoJ – Department of Justice  
RPA – Review of Public Administration

**Documents Attached**

Appendix 1 – Consultation Response Paper  
Appendix 2 – “Local Partnership working on Policing & Community Safety: A Consultation paper”