

## APPENDIX 1

# Response to “Local Partnership working on Police and Community Safety: A Consultation Document”



*Please note that this response that has been considered by Belfast City Council's Strategic Policy & Resources Committee and will be presented to Council on 1st June 2010. The response has been informed by Belfast Community Safety Partnership and the District Policing Partnership who will also respond to the consultation; though it is hoped that given the extensive, and joined-up consultation undertaken that the responses will be closely aligned.*

**On behalf of:** Belfast City Council

**Response Date:** 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2010

**Full Consultation document available at:** [www.dojni.gov.uk](http://www.dojni.gov.uk)

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## Background

### **Title: Local Partnership working on Police and Community Safety: A Consultation Document**

**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 for them to 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, for 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.

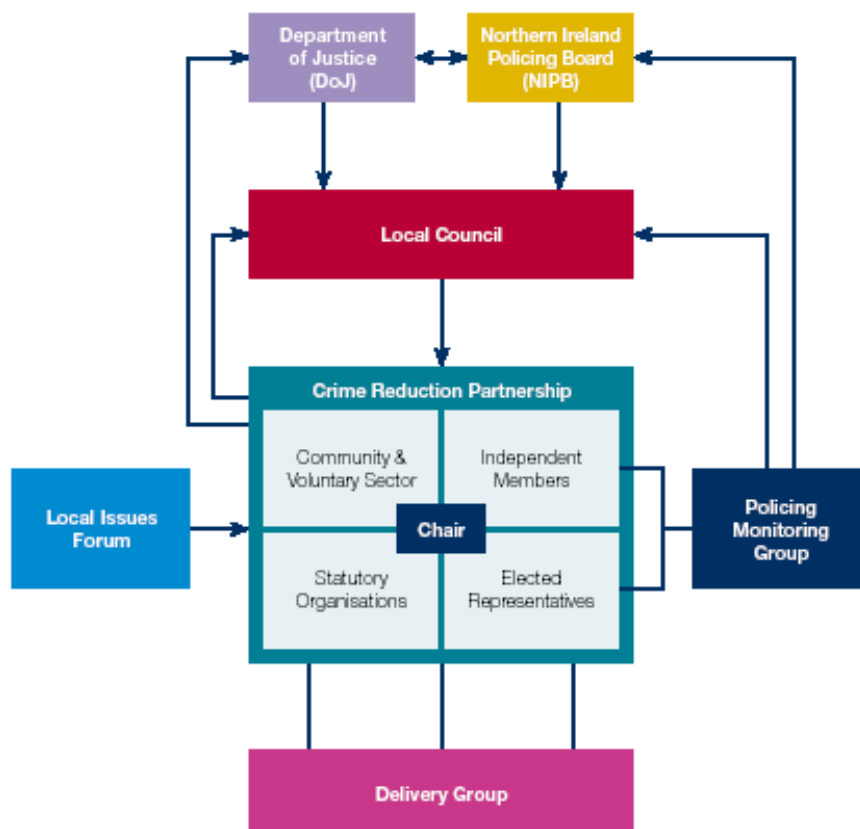
The consultation recommends that the new partnership should:

- 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, the NIO (now DOJ) has proposed one model for primary consideration (Model 2 as below) 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.

### Model Two –Crime Reduction Partnership



## ‘Belfast Crime Reduction Partnership (CRP)’

The suggested model proposes a single Crime Reduction Partnership 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, co-terminous with the proposed new council boundaries in May 2011. However, the Department is aware of the uncertainty around RPA and would wish to see single partnerships established by May 2011; even if RPA is not implemented at that time.

## Summary of consultation process in Belfast

Consultation was coordinated on behalf of Belfast City Council by the Community Safety and DPP teams within the Health & Environmental Services Department.

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.

## Questions considered by Belfast

### General issues

#### **Q1. Do you agree that the proposed model (Model 2) is the best option?**

While consultation focussed on the proposed model there was some concern voiced that the proposed structures would not 'simplify' the existing framework. It was noted that the dual lines of accountability and the proposal to establish Local Issues Fora and a Delivery Group might add to the existing myriad of structures in place throughout the city and it was suggested that this exercise should be used as an opportunity to either rationalise, or use existing, structures rather than create more and additional layers of partnership.

The view was also expressed that the proposed model was not radical enough and simply reframed what was already in place as opposed to trying to establish a single, genuinely integrated partnership and agenda. It is suggested that the model needs to be more visionary and that there may be merit in reconsidering the other models<sup>1</sup>.

#### **Q2. Do you agree with the proposed functions of the partnership?**

It was largely agreed that there was a need to support community engagement, partnership working, service delivery and accountability. However, there were differing views on whether it was appropriate to hold the police accountable through a separate process and structure. The view, for example, was expressed that there should be accountability for the strategic work of the Partnership and any sub-structures and not merely the police alone. It was recognised however that there were communities who would feel strongly about retaining the opportunity to influence and monitor local policing and to ensure transparency.

#### **Q3. Do you agree with the name – Crime Reduction Partnership?**

Universally it was agreed that this name was unsuitable. It was agreed that the name presents a narrow view of the broad agenda that the Partnership would be addressing and that much of the work of the partnership would not only be about reducing crime but increasing reporting, tackling fear of crime, and dealing with antisocial behaviour. Views from other statutory services such as the Fire and Rescue Service or Ambulance Service expressed concern that this name would not reflect the extensive outreach programmes they deliver and the proactive approach to improving and encouraging safer environments.

#### **Possible alternative suggestion: Safer [Belfast] Partnership**

**Rationale:** In Belfast this would build upon the existing Safer Belfast Plan (2009-2011). It would also offer the Partnership flexibility to address a broad range of 'safety' issues and is easily marketable.

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<sup>1</sup> Please see Appendix 1



#### **Q4. Do you agree that the Council should oversee delivery of the partnership plan?**

There was broad support for this proposal as it was agreed that the emerging structure and process should be aligned with community planning in the future; in which Council will play a leading role. It was also agreed that this would strengthen governance and accountability arrangements and ensure elected members had appropriate oversight and input into the work of the Partnership.

#### **Membership**

#### **Q5. Do you agree with the proposed membership of the CRP?**

There was a variety of views expressed in relation to this:

- There was broad agreement for representation from the statutory sector, elected members and the community/voluntary sector. It was noted however that the private sector is not expressly articulated as a potential member and in Belfast the role of the Chamber of Trade and Commerce, among other organisations, would be seen to be beneficial. Moreover, the view was also expressed that there should be linkages with the wider Criminal Justice system, and in particular the PPS and Courts Service.
- Concern was raised on a number of occasions in relation to the appointment of independent members and the need to ensure that these representatives were truly 'independent' and reflective of society in general
- It was acknowledged that appointment of the community/voluntary sector presented challenges in ensuring true representation; and also there was the perception that those groups on the structure had a greater opportunity to access services and funding. It was suggested that this could be overcome by combining the community/voluntary and independent sectors and through the Local Issues Fora.
- There was also a strong suggestion that the role of faith groups play a vital role in delivering community safety and their membership should be considered in the definition of the voluntary sector.
- Some elected members were of the opinion that there should be a greater balance, or perhaps outright majority, of elected members on the CRP; however there was no consistent view on this matter either by party groups or the Community Safety Partnership.
- Some elected members also raised concern about capacity as they may be asked to sit on multiple structures.
- In general therefore it was agreed that there should be clear guidelines on the roles and responsibilities of member organisations and an agreed appointment system.
- It was noted that the current make up of the DPP and sub groups reflected a broad demographic range and this was of working benefit to them, consideration should therefore be given

in selection to ensure diversity and including young people was key.

There was broad agreement that there should be as much flexibility for local determination as possible within the legislation; but that basic principles such as the categories of representatives, how they should be selected, and the proportion of seats that each should be allocated should be outlined in the legislation. It was suggested that the actual number of members could then be agreed locally to allow larger cities such as Belfast to accommodate the large number of potential members.

Lastly, it was noted that while the Council should play a leading role in supporting and driving the partnership that there should be commitment from other participating organisations – both to commit financial resources and support service delivery. It is hoped that putting the partnership and membership of certain organisations on a statutory footing would assist this.

### **Local accountability and engagement**

#### **Q6. Does this model provide suitable opportunity to engage at a local level?**

It was largely agreed that a single Local Issues Fora would not allow for adequate community engagement within Belfast. Again it was suggested that there should be flexibility within the legislation to support local determination to establish structures as appropriate. The view was also strongly held that this consultation should support a rationalisation of structures and as such, where possible, existing structures (such as those supported by the Area Partnership Boards) should be built upon rather than establishing new ones.

Key to supporting this model is the need to put the local community at the heart of the model. It was suggested that to enable local communities to have a voice there was a need to support and resource community development to build local capacity. This was considered key to any successful model.

It was also noted that the Local Issues Fora for Belfast was likely to be needed at a geographical level possibly in a North South, East and West of the city however the groups would need to be structured to be inclusive of all the community and that local communities should be offered equal access to participate.

The meetings in public held by the DPP were largely felt to be an ineffective way of engaging with the community (in most but not all areas) and it was suggested that greater use could be made of PACT and CPLC structures already in place that appear to have been more successful in engaging with local residents.

#### **Q7. Who should sit on the Local Issues Fora?**

It was suggested that the Local Issues Fora could mirror the strategic partnership/CRP at a local level; thus potentially involving elected representatives as well as representatives from the community, voluntary and

statutory sectors. In order to support this considerable investment in community capacity and infrastructure would be required therefore it is important that the work of this structure is closely aligned with other agendas such as Neighbourhood Renewal and Shared Futures.

A number of elected members and organisations raised concern about their capacity to attend the litany of partnership structures (whether geographical or issue-based) and so expressed some concern about this proposal. Some elected members also felt it was essential that locally elected representatives should have the opportunity to represent their areas and it was suggested this could be achieved by building on the existing DPP sub-group structure and broadening membership and function to include other partners, development of local [community safety] plans (that would in turn align with local policing plans), and local delivery. However, this again raised the issue of capacity for members (statutory and elected alike) to sit on multiple structures.

Importantly, it was felt that were elected members to sit on the Local Issues Fora that the appointment system should ensure that it is representatives from that area that take up these seats. This is not currently the case in the Belfast DPP sub-groups due to the agreed appointment system (i.e. De Hondt).

#### **Q8. Do you agree with the proposed accountability lines?**

The dual accountability and reporting lines were largely seen to be confusing and perpetuating the current separation of roles and agendas. In general it was felt that a single line of accountability would be preferable though further discussion would be required at a local and regional level on this matter.

It was also felt that there should be greater linkages, perhaps through membership, between the Local Issues Fora and the CRP and Police Monitoring Group. Elected members were also keen to ensure the close working between Council and PSNI was not lost and the view was also expressed that policing should be held accountable in line with the current PSNI District structures.

The view was taken by many that the CRP should be held accountable for performance against agreed strategic and local priorities for the city and neighbourhoods. The CRP could therefore develop a strategic plan and priorities for the city from which Local Issues Fora would then develop local plans. These would inform and align with the local policing plans and would be reported on to the main CRP and the public [on a quarterly basis]. The CRP could then take responsibility for reporting on performance to the public on a city-wide basis. It is suggested this process would prevent duplication of effort, establish a clear link between community input and eventual service delivery, and ensure there is transparency and accountability at a local and strategic level.

It was articulated that accountability should be against shared, priorities that require the input of a range of organisations. Therefore it was questioned whether a separate Police Monitoring Group was either necessary or

appropriate; as often outcomes measured at current DPP meetings are as a result of inter-agency working. Further consideration therefore of the other models may be warranted or alternatively there should a longer-term goal articulated with a staged approach.

Importantly, it was also noted that the Partnership should ultimately be accountable to the people it serves and that they should be able to feel the impact of the partnership's work on the ground. Therefore any model should be transparent, inclusive and accessible.

## Remuneration

### **Q9. Should members of the CRP (or its constituent parts) be remunerated and if so which ones?**

There was a wide range of views on this point; including that:

- No members of the partnership should be remunerated – this would ensure equality, ensure true commitment to the agenda and allow savings to be re-directed to front-line services
- Elected and independent members should be paid - this is due to the time commitment asked of them by sitting on multiple structures, recognising loss of earnings and the time commitment required for work outside formal meetings and to ensure buy-in.
- Only independent members should be remunerated - this role is played on a voluntary capacity and you would be unlikely to get applicants without this incentive
- If one sector is paid that all members (excluding the statutory sector) should be remunerated – but that this would lead to spiralling costs

In general it was felt that if elected and independent members were to be remunerated in some way to at least cover expenses that it should be on the basis of attendance and not a fixed payment. It was also agreed that the aim should ultimately be to direct as much resource as possible into actual delivery.

## Finance

### **Q10. How can it provide best value?**

In general it was agreed that this exercise should bring efficiencies and allow potential administrative savings to be re-directed to front-line services. However, elected members were keen to ensure that the current funding commitment offered by the Policing Board and Department of Justice (formerly NIO) to support the running of the DPP and CSP would not be diminished. Concern was also raised about the potential impact on staff that had supported the two partnerships' work over the last 7 years.

## Conclusions

### Broadly Agreed principles

While there were varied views on a range of the proposals, there was broad agreement on one central point – **that a single, integrated partnership should be created in the place of the existing CSP and DPP**. In addition, **there was universal rejection of the proposed name** and an acknowledgement that a single ‘Local Issues Forum’ structure would be insufficient to support community engagement in Belfast.

While there was not universal support for the proposed model it is recognised that Model 2 offers a pragmatic approach that may be acceptable to all parties. It is suggested, however, that this change process requires a staged approach and that a **longer-term goal** of full integration should be articulated; and that Model 2 might therefore be an initial step in this process.

While there are clear challenges in determining who and how members should be appointed it was agreed that the partnership should be **inclusive** and **competent** in their delivery. Importantly, the role of elected representatives on the partnership is crucial as they bring democratic legitimacy to the partnership and also act as representatives for their constituencies. It was suggested that being fully representative of all sectors would be more difficult but that perhaps modern technology, such as social network sites and the internet, might allow the partnership to establish a community of interest that would ensure accessibility in a more effective way that merely allocating seats on a formal structure.

There was also agreement that the new structure should continue to play a role in supporting the following key functions:

- establishing strategic priorities for the city and supporting associated strategic planning
- engaging with the public to support local planning and improve service delivery
- supporting service delivery to meet identified need
- providing transparency of decision making and resource accountability
- supporting performance management and accountability against agreed community safety targets

How this might be achieved is a different matter and further discussion will be required at both a regional and local level. In respect of Belfast it was agreed that the recommended model would not cater for the scale and complexity of engagement needs across the city. Therefore it is recommended that there should be **sufficient flexibility within the legislation** to allow the partnership to determine appropriate engagement and delivery structures. However it was acknowledged that it may need to specify basic ‘guiding principles’ governing these decisions. For example, while local areas may wish to agree the number of representatives on their CRP legislation should outline from

what sectors they should be sought, how they should be appointed and the proportionate allocation of seats.

There was varied views consensus on the issue of remuneration - though there was consensus that as much resource as possible should support service delivery - and there were differing views on the potential benefits and drawbacks of offering remuneration. With regard to accountability it was largely felt that the current separation of accountability would be confusing and perpetuate the current separation of roles. It is suggested that there should be **shared accountability** for the broader role and work of the partnership and therefore there may be merit in exploring the other Models further. In order to support this we have undertaken to illustrate alternatives to the model presented in the consultation (See Appendix 1). Further consultation and political agreement would be required to take these forward but we would be keen to discuss this in conjunction with the Department of Justice and the Policing Board.

On a more practical note it was felt strongly that guidance should be given by the DoJ and NIPB as soon as possible on the role and operational priorities for the CSP and DPP in the interim period. It was also acknowledged that while the consultation document highlights a completion date of May 2011, this would not be feasible as local Council elections around that time would inevitably delay the ability to appoint elected members to the new partnership; likely **until Autumn 2011**.

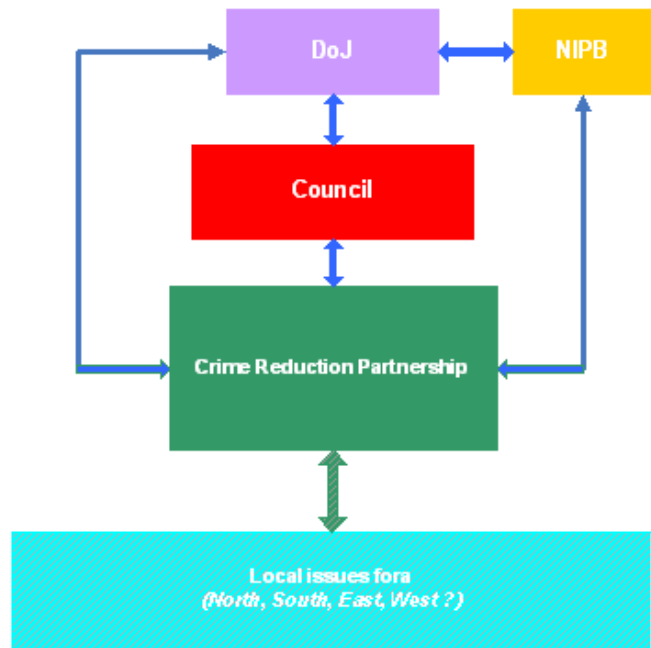
In conclusion, within Belfast, the consultation was well received. Belfast City Council has previously indicated its commitment to moving towards a community planning approach and the basic objectives of this consultation would support this emerging agenda. While a great deal of further discussion is required on the Belfast Model and who would play a role on the new structure Belfast City Council, the CSP and DPP welcome the opportunity to shape this consultation and would look forward to making further comment on developing proposals.

**For further information on this response please contact:**

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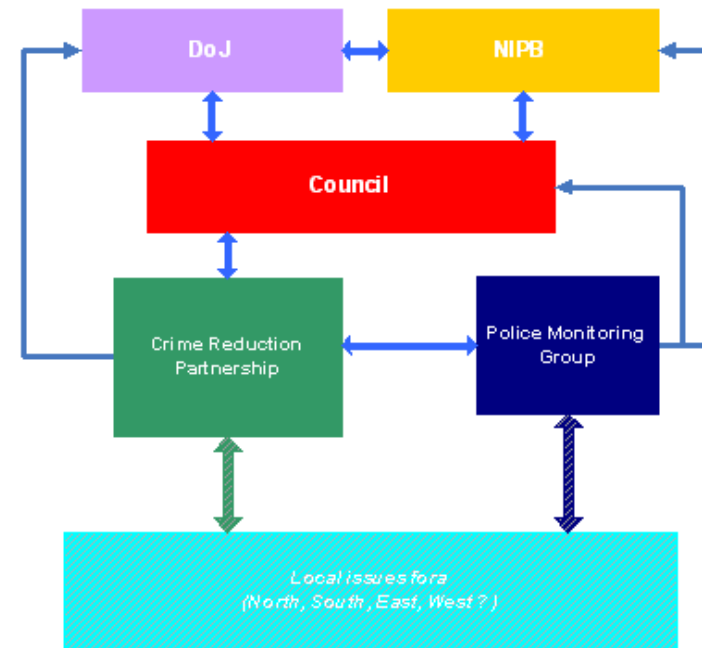
## APPENDIX 1 – POTENTIAL ALTERNATIVES

It was recognised throughout the consultation that there would need to be specific consideration of the Belfast model and that the legislation should offer sufficient flexibility for Belfast to establish appropriate local engagement structures and processes. The following, therefore, represent some potential models for consideration. Further discussion however would be required at both a local and regional level to agree structure, role and membership.



Further engagement and delivery structures as appropriate for example, PACTs, CPLCs, Get Home Safe Partnership etc.

MODEL A



Further engagement and delivery structures as appropriate for example, PACTs, CPLCs, Get Home Safe Partnership etc.

MODEL B

## Role of the Safer Belfast Partnership (SBP; name to be confirmed):

1. To establish strategic priorities for the city and ensure these are reflected in constituent organisations' strategies
2. To support community engagement and consultation in identification of priorities and delivery against these
3. To direct resources, both locally and on a strategic basis, to support delivery against these priorities
4. To support the development of strategic services where appropriate
5. To support alignment with other key strategies such as Neighbourhood Renewal, Shared Future etc
6. To hold local SBP accountable for delivery against local [crime reduction] plans

### Potential Membership:

- **Chairperson (elected member) +**
- 10 elected members (34% of membership)
- 8 statutory organisations (25%)
- 8 community/voluntary sector representatives (including 4 Chairpersons of sub-groups) (25%)
- 5 independent representatives (16%)

## Role of Local Issues Fora (*building upon existing structures such as DPP sub-groups and other neighbourhood Fora*):

1. To develop local [crime reduction] plans based on local prioritisation of strategic priorities; part of which will include the informing of local policing plans
2. To support community engagement and consultation in the development and delivery of local plans
3. To oversee delivery against agreed plans and report to the SBP on performance and support monitoring of performance at a local level
4. To help secure resources to support delivery in local neighbourhoods

### Potential Membership?:

- **Chairperson (Community/voluntary sector) +**
- 6 elected members (32% of membership)
- 5 statutory organisations (26%)
- 3 community/voluntary sector representatives (21%)
- 4 independent representatives (21%)

## Role of the Police Monitoring Group (*NB If Model 'A' was favoured these functions would be subsumed within the Safer Belfast Partnership and Local Issues Fora as appropriate*):

1. Monitoring police performance against achievement of the local policing plans and city-wide policing priorities
2. Informing the priorities of policing plans

### Potential Membership?:

- 11 elected members from SBP (55%) – including Chair
- 9 (5 independent representatives from SBP + 4 independent representatives nominated from Local Issues Fora) (45%)