



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Justice

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

‘Policing and Community Safety Partnerships: A
Review of Governance, Delivery and Outcomes’:
Department of Justice and Northern Ireland
Policing Board

21 January 2015

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

Committee for Justice

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Alastair Ross (Chairperson)
Mr Raymond McCartney (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Sammy Douglas
Mr Tom Elliott
Mr Paul Frew
Mr Seán Lynch
Mr Alban Maginness
Mr Patsy McGlone
Mr Edwin Poots

Witnesses:

Ms Moira Doherty	Department of Justice
Mr Steven McCourt	Department of Justice
Ms Marie Patterson	Department of Justice
Ms Amanda Stewart	Northern Ireland Policing Board

The Chairperson (Mr Ross): I welcome Moira Doherty, deputy director, community safety unit in the Department; Marie Patterson and Steven McCourt from the partnership development branch of the Department; and Amanda Stewart from the Policing Board. The meeting is being reported by Hansard and will be published on our website in due course. Please begin when you are ready. I will respond and open up the meeting to questions after you have spoken.

Ms Moira Doherty (Department of Justice): Mr Chairman, thank you. I welcome the opportunity to brief the Committee on the Department's initial thoughts in response to the Criminal Justice Inspection (CJI) report on the governance, delivery and outcomes of policing and community safety partnerships (PCSPs).

I will begin by introducing myself and my colleagues. I am head of the community safety unit in the Department of Justice (DOJ). I am joined today by Marie Patterson from our partnership development branch, Steven McCourt, who is head of that branch, and my colleague from the Policing Board, Amanda Stewart, who is the board's partnership director.

The Department and the board are very grateful to the inspectorate for agreeing to bring forward its planned inspection of PCSPs in the context of planning for local government reform. I will focus my opening remarks on the main issues impacting on PCSPs as a result of the report: value for money, effectiveness and wider local government reform.

Before touching on those issues, I will recap on the role that PCSPs were set up to perform: engaging with their local community and statutory groups to identify local concerns about community safety and putting in place plans and actions to contribute to a reduction in crime and the enhancement of community safety for the local area — in other words, local solutions for local problems. They were also to work in partnership with the police, local statutory bodies and the community to reduce the impact of antisocial behaviour and crime in the community and to improve community confidence in policing.

The inspectors told us that they recognise that amalgamating the previous district policing partnerships (DPPs) and community safety partnerships (CSPs) into a new structure presented challenges. Despite the challenges, as the chief inspector said, they found evidence of some successful projects that PCSPs had delivered and which had made a real difference to their communities.

Financial challenges, now faced by the whole public sector, make it even more important for us to maximise the effectiveness and efficiency of PCSPs, and Criminal Justice Inspection's report should help us to achieve that objective. The introduction of community planning, and the reduction in the overall number of PCSPs through local government reform, provide an opportunity to reduce the cost of administration in favour of front-line delivery and ensure that PCSPs are effective and efficient. However, we feel that further work is required to establish whether the figure of 20% recommended by CJI is appropriate for PCSPs, particularly given the fact that many PCSP staff are engaged in front-line operational delivery in communities. We will also need to consider the impact of any thematic subcommittees, and I will touch on that later.

The Department accepts CJI's view that the evaluation of projects requires more emphasis on measurable indicators to assess whether the interventions have had a positive impact. We will, therefore, work with colleagues in the Policing Board and the Department of the Environment (DOE) to develop appropriate performance measures, which will be aligned to those to be developed for district councils for the broader community planning piece. We agree that there is an opportunity to streamline the governance arrangements provided by the joint committee, and we accept that the committee should take a more strategic role in setting standards, combined with a more proportionate governance framework. Discussions will commence shortly with relevant stakeholders, particularly council chief executives, on the implementation of that recommendation. We expect that the discussions will consider setting a small number of strategic regional priorities — for example, alcohol and drugs or domestic violence — with an opportunity to consider the appropriateness of ring-fencing a proportion of the resources to deliver these. This should improve the connectivity between priorities at the regional, local and neighbourhood level. Decisions on how these priorities should be best addressed in each PCSP area, and what additional local priorities a PCSP may also wish to address, will be for each PCSP to determine.

I turn to the effectiveness of the policing committee and holding the PSNI to the account. The Independent Commission on Policing (ICP) envisaged a very active role for local policing structures and saw local policing bodies as playing a vital role in promoting policing in the community. A code of practice issued by the Department and the Policing Board in November 2012 provides guidance, rather than prescriptive operational requirements, relating to the work of the policing committee. The Policing Board considered the need for more specific guidelines, or minimum requirements, set out in the code to ensure regional consistency: in particular, clearer guidance on the reporting requirements for monitoring police performance; a standard pro forma for reporting to the policing committee; and greater clarity on the local policing plan process, specifically the input of PCSPs. The Policing Board has, therefore, accepted the proposal in the report that PCSPs receive access to more detailed crime analysis data and guidance on monitoring and challenging police performance, and it will work with the PSNI to implement that.

On the relationship between statutory designated bodies and PCSPs, the Department recognises that the reduction in the number of PCSPs through local government reform, plus the arrangements for Belfast, provide a greater opportunity for collaborative partnerships to be developed between PCSPs and the designated bodies. A specific induction programme will be developed for newly appointed members, including designated bodies for each PCSP, in order to clarify the role of PCSPs and emphasise the important contribution to be made to the broader community planning agenda.

CJI noted the impact that local government reform will have, and the resulting impact on local representation is the main issue for PCSPs. In particular, the report highlights the perceived risk that smaller communities may suffer from a lower level of representation and that constituents may feel a

loss of influence when subsumed into a larger district. I understand that this was discussed with PCSP members during the fieldwork stage of the review, and inspectors concluded:

"dealing with priority issues rather than geography is more likely to ensure an equitable approach based upon need".

On that basis, they were persuaded towards thematic subgroups rather than geographical subcommittees.

The Minister recognises that CJI's recommendations on representativeness provide an important template for the direction of PCSPs from April 2015, and he wishes to explore further with key stakeholders the recommendation on the establishment of thematic committees and subcommittees to address topical or seasonal issues. One aspect to consider is whether such groups are established on a task-and-finish basis, whereby a group is established for a specific purpose and then disbanded when the objective is achieved. In relation to the policing committee of PCSPs, however, the report highlights the significance attached to local accountability and concludes that PCSPs should utilise existing community engagement groups to identify community safety issues and engage with local policing teams to improve delivery.

On the Belfast model, as you have heard, the chief inspector and his fellow inspectors expressed a very strong view on the effectiveness of the principal PCSP and found no evidence of accountability monitoring or performance assessment of the work being carried out by the district partnerships. Dissolving the current structures in Belfast would, however, require legislative change, and we would, of course, wish to consult on any change of that nature.

Our focus at this stage is to ensure that front-line delivery is maintained until such time as the new PCSPs are established. We envisage that this process will be completed in June, following the appointment of independent members. In the meantime, PCSPs are reviewing and evaluating their current action plans to identify the projects that should be carried forward to 2015-16. Those will be amalgamated on a cluster basis, in line with the new council structure, into a delivery plan for the incoming partnerships. There will also be sufficient scope for the new PCSP to develop its own proposals and add to the plan.

The Minister recognises the opportunity that the report provides to ensure that PCSPs continue to develop their effectiveness, particularly in the context of a changed strategic environment. The Minister, reflecting his determination to ensure a genuine partnership approach to the development of PCSPs, plans to hold a workshop in early February with shadow district council chief executives, the Chief Constable, the chair of the Policing Board and heads of the respective designated bodies, to obtain their views on the practicality of the opportunities and challenges presented by these recommendations. The Minister will also seek views on the most appropriate method to engage with wider stakeholders, including political representatives, to ensure that all these views are taken into account. Naturally, the views of the Justice Committee are a very important aspect in this approach. Officials are working in partnership with colleagues in the Policing Board to consider the report in detail and are developing a joint response and plan of action to implement the recommendations. This will be shared with the Committee in due course.

The Chairperson (Mr Ross): Thank you very much. I want to ask one question about the cost before I bring in other members. I suspect that many of us will want to ask questions about this. You have accepted that there are savings to be made because of the reduction to 11 councils, but you are more lukewarm on whether you can reach the 20% administration levels recommended. Given that, generally, bodies spend about 10% or 12%, as the report says, on administration costs, how could you justify any of the PCSPs spending more than 20% of resources on that?

Ms Doherty: We are absolutely on the same page with CJI on the focus on front-line delivery. We need to look at these figures carefully. The role of PCSP managers might be described as administrative in the report, but some deliver front-line operational services. Depending on how that is captured, it could give a slightly different picture than a description of what they do day-to-day. We wanted to pause rather than saying that it should be a blanket 20%. We want to make sure that we capture the front-line operational delivery aspect of the work of PCSP staff. However, we absolutely accept that the front line is where the focus has to be and that we have to seek to drive down the administration costs as much as possible.

Mr Douglas: Thank you for your presentation. Moira, you will have heard from the inspection's representatives earlier. Why are you not accepting the proposals for Belfast?

Ms Doherty: It is not necessarily that we are not accepting them; we just need to look into them in more detail, particularly given that they would require legislation. It is not my understanding that Belfast has, in relation to the other districts, in and around the same population; it is my understanding that Belfast still comes out at having 18% of the overall population of Northern Ireland, the next highest being Armagh. Also, Belfast has 31% of crime across Northern Ireland. We need to consider the proposals with a much broader stakeholder group, given that it would require legislative change and the particularities of the Belfast area. Amanda, is there anything that you want to add to that?

Ms Amanda Stewart (Northern Ireland Policing Board): When the Policing Board was advertising for independent members, it needed to come to a view on the arrangements for Belfast. At that stage, we were aware that CJI was, potentially, looking at it. We had asked CJI to look at Belfast. We also knew that district policing structures were being reviewed. It was in that context that the board made its decision, having itself undertaken a review of Belfast the year before and given that the sense among members whom we spoke to in Belfast was that the district structure was particularly effective.

Where there was a requirement for change was to the principal PCSP, because it was a potential duplication. The legislation specifies that Belfast should not undertake the functions of a district unless it is satisfied that the district is not performing. The fact that the Belfast principal did not undertake any of those functions would suggest that the districts were doing the job that they were set up to do.

The board made its decision on the basis that the population of Belfast is 335,000, the nearest comparator being Armagh, Banbridge and Craigavon district, which has a population of 203,000. So a significant proportion of the population is still in Belfast. That and the fact that it had 31% of crime in 2013-14 were the key drivers for the decision to retain the four-district structure. That was supported by the police at that time as well.

Mr Douglas: I understand about percentage of crime, given the size of Belfast. To be honest, I thought that Belfast had an extra 50,000-odd residents, apart from anything else. If Belfast continues with the present arrangements, how do the Department and the Policing Board propose to address the findings? Some of this stuff is very scathing, as you have read yourself.

Ms Doherty: Do you mean the report?

Mr Douglas: Yes. Some of the criticisms of the structures and procedures are very scathing. If they continue in their present form, how do you propose to address that criticism?

Ms Stewart: At the Policing Board, one of the issues that we have looked at is, in appointing independent members, trying to ensure duplication between the principal and subgroups so that no independent member on the principal PCSP is not also part of the subgroups. There is an issue for the Belfast principal PCSP of disseminating good practice. There is the whole issue of the city centre and a number of specific areas particularly relevant to Belfast that the police have raised with us. There is potential for the principal PCSP to take on a much more strategic role, particularly in relation to visitors coming into Belfast, for instance, some of the bigger issues and even the business community. We propose to talk to some of the Belfast members to get their experience.

Obviously, in developing the guidance and code of practice, we will want to reflect some of the comments made by CJI. My reading of the report is that it broadly says that it was in line with the amalgamation of the councils, which suggested that its rationale for doing away with the four districts was population-based. There is definitely an opportunity to assess what the principal PCSP does, and we will do that through the development of the guidance and the code of practice. From the board's perspective, on the issue of making sure that there is joined-up membership, the legislation provides for the four chairs to sit on the Belfast PCSP. We will propose that the vice-chairs also sit on the Belfast PCSP and that there is no member of the principal PCSP who does not sit on any other district PCSP.

Mr Douglas: Thanks, Amanda.

Ms Doherty: From our perspective, and working in collaboration with board colleagues, we are taking on board the whole report. It gives us a very helpful steer for this transitional period moving into the new structures, and, certainly, we need to reflect on what we might need to do in our assessment of training needs and the training guidance for new members. We also need to look at our governance and our relationship with local chief executives and so on. We might need to make changes there because it is quite clear that we have a good bit to go to improve the effectiveness of our contribution as much as the operation of the PCSPs.

Mr Douglas: Finally, you highlighted the fact that the district board found that there was no evidence of accountability, monitoring or performance assessment work being carried out. Can you assure us that that will be addressed? If there is a problem there at the moment, it has to be addressed.

Ms Doherty: Absolutely, and that is why we asked for this inspection to be brought forward. We think that it is really important for us to get off on the right foot. We have an opportunity here, particularly with community planning. It offers a really good opportunity to reboot the PCSP arrangements and to do more to help them to fulfil their potential. PCSPs have been running for two years, but we are all very conscious of the changed financial context. Money for public spending is becoming increasingly precious, and we have to do all that we can to make sure that it is being spent in the best possible way. So, we need to make sure that there is a proportionate governance system that gives assurance on value for money and performance but without perhaps what we see from this inspection report, which is bureaucracy rather than assurance. We need to rebalance that.

The Chairperson (Mr Ross): You talk about potential and say that there is a long distance to go. We heard about potential in the last evidence session as well. We heard how PCSPs are not functioning particularly well in many areas but have the potential to do good work. Will there be another comprehensive review in a number of years to determine whether they have become more effective and whether they are more valuable than some might argue that they are now?

Ms Doherty: The inspectors will come back. Steven, remind me when their update will be.

Mr Steven McCourt (Department of Justice): We will bring to the Justice Committee what we agree on how we will take the action plan forward. As the inspectors said to you in the previous evidence session, Chair, they envisage a full-blown inspection and review of the next four years on the new PCSPs. That is what we will work towards when putting in place the structures to ensure that, in four years' time, to ensure continuity, there will be a proper assessment of the work of the PCSPs moving forward.

Ms Doherty: In the meantime, it will be for the joint committee to make sure that we are setting the appropriate performance indicators and monitoring those in the most appropriate way. The CJI will then provide that external validation. Clearly, we need to recalibrate how that performance management is done.

Mr McCartney: As the architects of PCSPs, you have a sense of what should make up an ideal PCSP. Have you aligned this report with the current structures and said, "Here's the theory; the practice is in a, b, c and d", and appraised each of the partnerships? Have you done that exercise?

Ms Doherty: We are going through that process. The report was published in December, and we have intensive work to do for the establishment of the next PCSPs. You asked about the theory versus the practice. We have a lot to learn. One of the things that struck us was the approach of the joint committee: because of the focus on local, we were not prescriptive about some things. On the administrative staffing structures, for example, the focus for PCSPs had always been on developing local flexibility. From this report, we learned that there should have been a framework or a target set for the amount spent on administration. So, we need broader engagement with the new chief executives and so on to try to get that connectivity, bearing in mind that, with the pressure of local government reform, there is a huge change process going on. We want to make sure that we are involved in that from the outset and that we are going with the grain of that. That is the exercise that we are going through.

Mr McCartney: So, there will be individual meetings with each of the —

Ms Doherty: The Minister is planning to have a workshop to kick it off.

Mr McCartney: I understand that. However, you do not want a scenario in which your appraisal of a PCSP is that it is doing relatively well, as per your plan, but its members are brought to a full meeting of all PCSPs, at which you tell everyone, "Here's what we all should be doing", only to hear them say that they already do that. To me, it should be an exercise in which, if some are strong and others weak, you say, "You're doing that well", or "You could be doing this better" or "You're doing that badly", and giving an example. We do not want to end up with a generic, cover-all attitude of, "Let's do it again", and, in four years' time, not have improved.

Ms Doherty: The sharing of good practice is important, and that came out very much in the report. In this reboot of the relationships, the Department, and the board in particular, need to take a more active role in setting standards and encouraging the sharing of best practice. Some of the issues concern how evidence is captured or how evaluations are done. It might be that there are lots of very strong, effective, innovative projects happening in communities across Northern Ireland but that they are not being run in a way that allows the evaluation to demonstrate the difference that they have made. I genuinely believe that. So, part of this is about growing that capacity model around the better use of evidence evaluation. It is not just the PCSPs that need to do that; all of us who are engaged in policymaking need to be moving more into the space of being able to demonstrate value.

Mr McCartney: It is also about taking the practical steps. Let us go back to the beginning of the DPPs — I am not saying that there is anything untoward, but there is no representative of the PSNI to hear this, and I think that they have a big role in the dynamic of making these things work. When the DPPs began, in theory, all questions had to be submitted in advance, which many said made the meetings very staid. Everybody knew what question they would be asked and had their answer ready. Then, local commanders or local officers started to think on their feet and realised that doing so made the meeting, so they started to answer questions spontaneously, and people said that there was better engagement. If we take that forward, the police will have a big role in making this more effective, as will other agencies. The input from the local structures within the PSNI can make the difference in some of these projects. I do not know how you relay that. I know that the Chief Constable is going to the workshop, but I am talking about a district-by-district analysis and the Chief Constable saying to local people, "You fail if you allow your meeting to become a staid microphone meeting." Meetings should be dynamic and engaging, obviously within certain parameters, to encourage openness. That should be the case across all aspects of community safety.

Mr McCourt: In moving forward, the training needs analysis and local government reform, with the reduction from 26 councils to 11, provide huge opportunities of scale for the police, political members, independent members and, importantly, designated members and the Department. We have an opportunity to get the training needs right, kick off with the reconstitution of the PCSPs and move forward in the right way. That also applies to community planning. The PCSPs formed an integral part of the capturing of information for the community plan, as the CJI acknowledged. There is an opportunity here to put the process back on track, notwithstanding the fact that there are many, many good examples of the work of PCSPs at the moment.

Ms Stewart: The Policing Board has recognised that, perhaps, it stepped back to allow that local dynamic to evolve in the new PCSPs in a less prescriptive way than was the case for the DPPs. The board's discussions with the Chief Constable on the move to 11 districts, which will have coterminosity with the new PCSPs, are an opportunity to look again at where one district commander is in charge of a particular council area aligned to that PCSP. In some way or other, that had been lost in the move: the PSNI moved much sooner to seven or eight districts, and the structure of 26 PCSPs was still in operation.

The Policing Board is also conscious that, in reviewing the policing plan — a refresh of the policing community strategy is ongoing — it has to align what PCSPs do to support policing in that context. Priorities for policing should also be the priorities for PCSP action plans. They should also be the accountability framework for some of those arrangements and for the delivery of policing with the community. Somehow, all of the strategic bit became a bit convoluted: there are a number of very good, worthwhile projects, but the policing plan should be saying that the policing priorities for PCSPs need to be violent crime, domestic violence and antisocial behaviour. We were not being that prescriptive, but there is recognition that there may be a need to go back to that.

We are also working with the PSNI to try to bring the new district commanders, who are just taking up post, up to speed so that they understand what the board's vision for PCSPs will be and what the requirements are, particularly the development of the local policing plan. In some ways, CJI was

saying to us that that had been lost in the PCSP structure and that the policing plan was being developed in isolation from the PCSP plan and from input from the PCSPs themselves.

So it is a really good opportunity. There is a reconstitution of PCSPs, a move to 11 structures and, conterminous with both, a new district structure coming in. There is an opportunity to get this right and set performance indicators for both the police and the PCSPs that can measure the effectiveness of the arrangements.

Mr McCartney: What work are you taking forward on the representativeness?

Ms Doherty: On the geographical point?

Mr McCartney: Yes.

Ms Doherty: The Minister also wants to explore that. The inspectors' view is that we should look at thematic subgroups on regional or seasonal issues rather than drilling down into local areas. We will need to consider that, because the Minister puts particular emphasis on representativeness and not wanting to dilute it. We will have to explore that, and any views will be very welcome.

Mr McCartney: What is your timeline for doing that?

Ms Doherty: We do not yet have an overall timeline because the workshop in February will kick off a number of the actions, but we can let you know when we have one.

Mr McCartney: Will you be back here for that discussion?

Ms Doherty: Yes.

Mr Frew: Can you give me examples of things that the new PCSPs will be able to do that could not have been delivered more efficiently and effectively in a council setting?

Ms Doherty: I take where you are coming from on the efficiency and effectiveness point in that there does need to be better integration with the overall council. Where we come back to with PCSPs is the overall legislative framework around policing with the community, accountability and the fact that that is enshrined in the way that it is in the legislation.

In terms of efficiency and effectiveness, I agree that there are opportunities to integrate with the council and other council functions, particularly now that we are moving into community planning.

Mr Frew: I do not want to put words in your mouth, but basically what we are saying is that, because it is in the legislation, we have to do it.

Ms Doherty: Obviously, the fact that it is in legislation, it is the law, so it is important for that reason. It is also the fact that it reflects the unique emphasis on that civic engagement and local accountability for policing that was envisaged by Patten.

Mr Frew: You talk about civic engagement. Hardly anyone knows PCSPs or a member of a PCSP, yet council gets blamed for everything. Why are we doing something over again that has clearly failed?

Ms Doherty: Do you mean reconstituting PCSPs?

Mr Frew: Yes.

Ms Doherty: I would not necessarily accept that PCSPs have failed. Definitely, there is a way to go in improving their performance and how they are overseen and governed, but I would not necessarily accept that they have failed, especially when, from our perspective, you see the range of projects that have been delivered that have made a real difference. I would defend them from that perspective.

Mr Frew: I would not deny that for one moment, because I know of some of the good work that has come through or been channelled through the PCSPs, but they could have been delivered and run through a council system just as effectively and probably more efficiently.

Mr McCourt: I just want to emphasise that, in many respects, PCSPs are not part of the council structure but in many regards are drawn into a council framework in their make-up because the majority of the councillors are on the committee. In addition, the staffing structure is provided by council staff.

There is also the evidence that the CJI brought forward on good practice. Newry and Mourne District Council, for instance, has an analysis hub to capture information from across the council that is not just PCSP-related. So, in many respects, a lot of them are drawn into the council framework, but we are saying that we could make it better. I think the point that you are making is that there is an improvement to be made in relation to that, and the CJI has acknowledged that.

Ms Stewart: One of the criticisms we heard about PCSPs is that they have become very much like a council committee, and that that has stagnated the opportunity for them to be out in communities engaging in the way that was envisaged. Some people are also put off by their structure because they operate like a committee of council. A number of young people in particular who we spoke to do not engage with PCSPs because they are not familiar with the committee structure within a council.

When we conducted exit interviews, even independent members said that the formality of the structure is what puts them off. We from the Policing Board would say that that model of independent members on the Policing Board and PCSPs is an effective model, and you would expect me to say that.

One difficulty that we struggled with, even with DPPs, was around trying to assess their effectiveness without getting into numbers of seats and crime figures. I was struck by someone asking me, "How do you measure success when success is that nothing happened?" In a lot of communities, that is what they are doing — ensuring that something does not happen. It is difficult to capture that, and that is a piece of work that we need to do, but we have struggled with it over the past number of years.

Mr Frew: Strategic objective 2 is:

"to improve community safety by tackling crime and ASB through:

- ensuring that local statutory bodies and agencies deal with the ASB and crime-related issues that matter in their area; and*
- working in partnership with the police, local statutory bodies, agencies and the community to reduce the impact of ASB and crime on the community."*

I take it for granted that that second aspect is very worthwhile and that really good work that needs to be done. At the same time, that is easy said. Tell me how a PCSP can tackle crime.

Ms Stewart: The aspiration and the model that the Policing Board envisaged is quite simple. The police come along and say, "Here are the issues that we have in this community around crime and community safety". What the board had envisaged happening with the PCSPs is happening to some extent. CJI would say that, on other issues, it is not happening, and we would probably admit that. The police say, "Here is what we, as a police service, will do to tackle those particular issues, but what are you other partners around the table going to do?" That is the bit that I think is missing, to be honest with you. I do not think that it is all joined up enough at a local level to actually make a difference. If you have a particular issue around domestic violence, the police come and say, "Here is what we are doing". The statutory agencies say what they are doing, and the local community is brought in and says, "Here is our input to it", and the effectiveness of that is measured. To me, that is a good and effective PCSP that is working well, but I am not sure that that is happening in a lot of cases.

Mr Frew: You are absolutely right. You have hit the nail on the head. That leads to this next question: how can you ever ensure that local statutory bodies and agencies will deal with antisocial behaviour? PCSPs have no regulatory statutory framework on this. The Housing Executive, the councils and the police do. On more occasions than enough, what those three agencies do is hand

people log sheets to fill in. The antisocial behaviour continues, and more log sheets get filled in. How can you ensure that local statutory bodies will deal with it effectively beyond handing out log sheets?

Ms Doherty: One of the things that we are definitely going to be looking at in the next stage is the role of the designated bodies and what they see their role as when they are round the table. Are they just turning up to a meeting, or are they there to actually engage with the issues and deliver a joined-up and collaborative solution? That is something that we are looking at. The Minister intends to engage with the heads of the designated bodies. We also need to think about induction and training so that the right people are around the table and so that, when they are, they know clearly what is expected of them when they are there. We in the Justice Department are saying constantly that we come at the end of the line and that, for things like antisocial behaviour in particular, it is the other social interventions that are outside the justice sphere, such as early intervention and prevention, that can have the best impact. Having all those people round the table and actively engaged is extremely important.

Mr Frew: But what is expected of them? I do not believe that a PCSP knows what is expected of a statutory body. They will come, they will sit there, and, when they are asked to do something, they will say, "You need to take that back; I do not think that we have the vires for that and we certainly do not have the budget", and shrug their shoulders.

Ms Stewart: The issue of statutory compulsion was touched on by the CJI earlier. The police are coming along, and the police commander has devolved operational responsibility and is the decision-maker within that body in that district. What you have are statutory bodies that are not compelled by statute to be anything other than there. When the Justice Act was being developed, there was a discussion around whether you would mirror the crime and disorder partnerships, where you had to have statutory bodies whose plans had a statutory responsibility to contribute to community safety. There probably needs to be legislation there. The police have said to the board that they are disappointed that that bit of the Justice Act did not come through. There may be an opportunity to have a look at it again. However, to some extent, community planning will provide that framework as well.

Mr Frew: If community planning provides that framework, why not just have it in community planning?

Mr McCourt: One of the issues that we may consider in looking at the way forward is how councils, shadow chief executives, political members, the Justice Committee and the Policing Board see PCSPs evolving in that regard. Will they provide, for argument's sake, the framework for the safer aspect of a community plan? There is a compulsion on community planning partners to ensure that their own specific plans etc mirror the commitments of the community plan. So, there is that natural spine running through, which was not there before. It is an opportunity to see whether we can exploit that to build and strengthen PCSPs moving forward.

Mr Frew: Thank you very much. I want to say that, whilst I am quite damning of PCSPs, I appreciate the work done on the ground by individuals within them. They try their best. They are not at fault; it is the system.

Mr Lynch: Following on from the CJI, Moira, you mentioned two meetings. The discussions with the new CEOs are going to be very important in rectifying some of the problems from the outset. Will it be compulsory for the CEOs to go to those? The other step that I believe is important in rectifying some of the problems is the stakeholder meetings. Those are two key pillars in rectifying many of the problems that have been outlined here today.

Ms Doherty: Thank you for that. Obviously, we would not have the power to compel the shadow chief executives to attend. However, I do not think that that will be necessary. So far, we have had really good engagement with shadow chief executives. We have two representatives who we have been engaging with on some of the transitional points. I do not think that there would be any lack of appetite to work with us to ensure that this very important function is made as effective as possible. It is also an opportunity for them to speak directly to the Minister and give their feedback on how they have seen PCSPs operating and how they see things having to change.

Mr McGlone: Thank you. I want to comment on a number of things from your presentation. First of all, I go back to your point about demonstrating value. I think, really, that it has to be all stripped away and be about demonstrating effectiveness. In that regard, I was a wee bit concerned to hear what you

were saying about the Policing Board stepping back from that. The effectiveness of the Policing Board is crucial and needs to be replicated in a consistent manner right across the other statutory agencies and officials who attend. If they are not punching at their weight and are stepping back to allow things to evolve, you are going to have a patchwork quilt. You will be back here in another two or three years with the same report, only it will be for 11 rather than 26, and you have still not solved your problem. It concerns me a bit that the police are stepping back and removing themselves from it and that other statutory agencies will look at the police backing off and, to use your phrase, evolve a dynamic all of their own. The problem has been that there has not been a consistent pattern of effectiveness.

On determining effectiveness, one method of effectiveness is communication, which is so crucial for a community safety partnership. You have the resources to look at your local papers. Run those across all your local papers for, say, the last 12 months and see how many stories there are that are a direct consequence of the activity of a community safety partnership. That is one benchmark to look at. I think that you will be surprised at the dearth of stuff that there is. The local papers is one method of connectivity with your local communities, which is very important.

I listened to you talking about training needs. Raymond touched on this as well. If you do not have a SWOT analysis of each of the PCSPs, you are not best targeting your training needs. Some statutory agencies in some PCSPs may not be pulling their weight. That could be down to an ineffective person. It could be a management issue with the manager of the PCSP. However, if you go in with the one-size-fits-all approach to this, you will not really tackle the problems and issues that there are where there is good practice and bad practice.

At the end of it all, my concern is that, if you do not know what problem you are tackling at each of the 11 individual locations of the new councils, you are going to wind up with a solution that does not match each of the 11. You will not have a solution and you will still have the repetitive nature of the problems facing you. Those are some of the observations based on what you are saying.

It goes back to the key point: how do you ensure that good practice and a consistent, effective approach is driven by the Policing Board and the Department of Justice, right across the North, in partnership and conjunction with the statutory agencies? For example, one of the things I have been wondering is how often the chief executives of the key elements of that — such as the Policing Board, the Chief Constable, the chief executives of the relevant health trusts within a given area and the regional manager for the Housing Executive — actually come together and say, "Right, this is how we need to drive things on here. These are the issues that are coming up. How can we do things better?" I would expect that it should happen on a very structured basis, but I will be surprised if you tell me that it is happening on a structured and properly managed basis.

Ms Doherty: Your point about sufficiently senior people coming together is something that it would be perfect for us to pick up in the workshop, because we will have those people around the table. The point on the training needs is very well met, in that some of the responses to the report are really for the board and the Department to recalibrate the governance and how we do our business. We can do that regardless, because that is something that should apply across the board in terms of improving effectiveness. The point that you make around individual SWOT analyses and being much more responsive to what the training need is in each area is something that we need to reflect on and capture.

Ms Stewart: Perhaps I could just clarify my point around the effectiveness and drawing back. What I was referring to was that, when we were doing the consultation on PCSPs, the Policing Board in particular was heavily criticised around the DPPs because it was viewed as being too prescriptive around what the DPPs had to do at that time. So, in developing the guidance and the code of practice, there was a conscious decision taken at that time not to be as prescriptive, with you being required to do this by this stage and that by another stage. To some extent, CJI has said that we have probably moved too far back around some of that, particularly around the policing aspects of it. That is where you have a disparity between districts. One commander is presenting in a particular way, whereas the Police Board would have controlled that. It is hard to get a happy balance, but there is a balance to be struck. It is probably somewhere in the middle. It came from a criticism in the consultation that we were too prescriptive and that we were actually stagnating the local development of DPPs.

Mr McGlone: It was not what you do; it is how you do it, because that is the bit that comes back time and time again. You can have a very good senior police officer coming along who is on the ball and

gets back to the DPP to make sure that things get done, or you can have somebody who comes along to the DPP and says, "Here's the stats. Here you go. I'm away. See you in three months". It goes back to that effectiveness issue. For me, that would clearly be an issue for the Policing Board to make sure that good practice is driven in terms of public accountability and how that is done effectively and efficiently. That should be consistent right across the public sector. It is about how that is done and driven downwards. I think that would help those PCSPs to do the work.

Finally, you mentioned the issue of coterminosity. Forgive my ignorance on it, but how are you going to divide seven into 11?

Ms Stewart: We are not.

Mr McGlone: I know that. That is why you talked about coterminosity.

Ms Stewart: The police are moving to 11 districts in April 2015, which will allow coterminosity. We have not had that before, which I think, in some way or another, has probably impacted, particularly around the policing structures, where you have a chief inspector responsible for two or three different areas or two chief inspectors straddling different areas. So, a decision was taken and the board pushed very heavily to ensure that the police districts that were being established in April were coterminous with the new council boundaries, which would, in turn, make them coterminous with PCSPs.

Mr McGlone: All right. That makes sense, at last. Thank you.

Mr McCourt: I will just add something in relation to the training needs analysis. One thing that we have now that we have never had before is this report to act as the benchmark in setting out what is good practice and what could be improved upon. That is the benchmark that we are setting from and why we ask CJI to bring the report forward, taking on board the further local government reform and the fact that the 26 councils would no longer be in existence as we move to potentially new members etc in the new 11-council structure.

Mr Elliott: I will be brief. I noticed that you indicated that there may be a review of the 20% proposal for administration costs to run the partnerships. What is it 20% of? Is it just core funding? Obviously, the PCSPs have the opportunity to bring in other funding as well. Is it just core funding or does it include other funding that is brought in?

Ms Doherty: It would be 20% of the core funding.

Mr Elliott: If they double that by bringing in money from other areas or even increase it by 50%, that may end up as only 10% of their overall budget. Is that right?

Ms Doherty: That is right.

Mr Elliott: OK. If you were going to review it — I noticed that you said that you may review or change that — what would you be thinking of? I notice that some are quite well over the 20%.

Ms Doherty: Before we put advice to the Minister and he makes a decision on it, what we want to understand really well is the extent to which some of our PCSP managers spend a significant proportion of their time on front-line delivery. We do not want to lose that. We met PCSP managers when the report was published. There was some feeling among them that the work that they and their staff did, which they perceived as front-line delivery and really making a difference, was not captured when their salaries were badged as admin. We just want to have a very clear understanding and, first of all, to do a little bit more fieldwork and have better analysis of what would be appropriate — we are not saying that 20% is not — and also how we categorise the money that is spent on the salaries of those members of staff to make sure that what we provide is an accurate reflection of what they do.

Mr McCourt: In the report, CJI acknowledged in the evidence that it brought forward that it was comparing purely the admin cost of supporting the PCSP and did not reflect the duties that those people perform. As Moira rightly said, a significant proportion of their time is spent in front-line delivery. In accounting terms, that would be moved out of admin into programme management, which would have given a completely different perspective on the figures.

Ms Marie Patterson (Department of Justice): It is also important to find the story behind the figures that are set out in the CJI report in terms of the amounts that are currently spent on admin and operations. In some of the partnerships, the council match funding is perhaps used primarily to run projects and the joint committee funding primarily to fund the machine behind that. It is difficult to draw any direct comparison because they are perhaps all doing slightly different things in that regard.

Ms Doherty: The principle remains that the focus has to be on front-line delivery and a reduction of admin, but we need to do more work on the precise number.

The Chairperson (Mr Ross): Thank you very much. We appreciate your help.