



Police Service
of Northern Ireland

South Armagh Policing Review

**Findings and
Recommendations**

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17 December 2020

Chief Superintendent Philip Knox

T/Chief Inspector Finola Dornan

Context

In January 2020, Police Service of Northern Ireland Chief Constable Simon Byrne initiated a review of policing arrangements in South Armagh.¹ This was precipitated, in part, by the immediate public reaction to a social media release on Christmas Day 2019 in which the Chief Constable appeared outside Crossmaglen Police Station with Local Policing Team officers carrying police issue assault rifles.

Community feedback obtained in the period which followed highlighted broader concerns regarding the style and tone of local policing. This influenced the decision to dedicate time and resource to reflect objectively on the policing approach and recommend changes that would facilitate an increasingly visible, accessible, responsive and community-focused service.²

Ultimately, this Review seeks to build confidence and support for policing in South Armagh in the interests of community safety. The Review was focused on understanding how policing has been felt and experienced by the people of South Armagh. Community perspective has remained at the forefront of considerations.

The recommendations within this report seek to align the South Armagh policing model to standard organisational practice and to achieve outcomes outlined in the Policing Plan 2020 – 2025, namely:

- We have a safe community
- We have confidence in policing
- We have engaged and supportive communities

¹ All references to South Armagh within the body of this report should be read as referring to the boundaries of Slieve Gullion District Electoral Area

² Terms of Reference can be read in full at Appendix A

Evidence Base

The Review was conducted over a six month period between February and October 2020.³ Information was obtained from a wide range of sources. Broad categories included:

- Academic, Research and Policy Papers
- Press Reporting
- Internal and External Consultation
- Human Resources Data
- Police Performance Analysis
- Benchmarking
- Community Surveys administered by Community Restorative Justice (CRJ) and Newry, Mourne and Down Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP)

Appendix A

Provides a copy of the Terms of Reference for the South Armagh Policing Review

Appendix B

Provides a detailed overview of reference material and sources

Appendix C

Provides further information on consultation methods

Appendix D

Provides a copy of survey findings and analysis conducted by Community Restorative Justice to inform the Review

Appendix E

Provides a summary of survey responses produced by PCSP Manager, Newry Mourne and Down District Council on behalf of the Review

³ A postponement took place between April and June 2020.

This was attributable to competing operational requirements experienced by the Police Service during the Covid-19 pandemic

Area

Newry, Mourne and Down District Council area is managed by the Police Service as, 'D District'. It had a population of 171,533 at the time of the 2011 Census, a figure which is estimated to have risen to 181,368 by June 2019.⁴

South Armagh is a rural border community located within Newry, Mourne and Down District Council and Newry and Armagh Constituency. A resident population of 27,469 people living in 9,319 households was recorded at the time of the last Census across the seven electoral wards within Slieve Gullion District Electoral Area (DEA) – Bessbrook, Camlough, Crossmaglen, Forkhill, Mullaghbane, Newtownhamilton and Whitecross.⁵ Estimates in January 2020 indicate that the population of Slieve Gullion has increased to 30,330 people.⁶ Council and DEA maps are attached at **Appendix F**.

Policing in South Armagh is organised on the basis of the localities of Crossmaglen (ward population 2,665 across 967 households, 2011) and Newtownhamilton, encompassing the remaining DEA wards of Bessbrook, Camlough, Forkhill, Mullaghbane and Whitecross (combined population 24,698 across 8,352 households, 2011).⁷

South Armagh reported the following demographics in the 2011 Census:

Religion

83.68% of people were brought up in the Catholic religion and 14.53% in Protestant/Other Christian religions.

Nationality

62.27% identified as Irish, 24.24% as Northern Irish and 14.87% as British.⁸

Ethnicity

99.47% of population were from the white (including Irish Traveller) ethnic group.

Language

2.28% did not have English as their first language. The most common languages after English were Polish and Lithuanian. 22.75% had some knowledge of Irish.

Age

The average age of the population was 33 years. 25.43% were aged under 16 years and 11.27% were aged 65 and over.

Gender

49.90% of the usually resident population were male and 50.10% were female.

Disability

19.30% of people had a long term health problem or disability that limited their day-to-day activities.

⁴ ninis2.nisra.gov.uk

⁵ NI Census 2011, ninis2.nisra.gov.uk

⁷ NISRA, Northern Ireland Local Council Infographics, January 2020

⁶ Census 2011 - ninis2.nisra.gov.uk

⁸ The selection of more than one national identity was possible within this section of the Census

Employment

64.48% of people aged between 16 and 74 years were economically active and 7.13% were unemployed.

Newry and Armagh Constituency is represented at Westminster by a Sinn Fein MP. At the Northern Ireland Assembly, Sinn Fein has three MLAs, with DUP and SDLP each returning one MLA for the constituency area. In Newry, Mourne and Down District Council, Slieve Gullion DEA is currently represented by five Sinn Fein, one Ulster Unionist and one SDLP local councillors.

South Armagh is home to the Ring of Gullion, an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, and as such is a key tourist asset for Northern Ireland.⁹ The Regional Development Strategy in Northern Ireland, which sets out the long term vision on the future development of Northern Ireland up until 2035, identifies the Ring of Gullion as one of only nine strategic natural resources.¹⁰ The area has much to offer, now and in the future. The policing approach should complement and enhance local development and prosperity.

The area is influenced culturally and by infrastructure with the Republic of Ireland. Regular cross border movement of people is evident in terms of employment, education and social interaction. There are pockets of limited telecoms reception in some areas and it is common for residents to utilise southern mobile telephone networks.¹¹ The local road network is primarily comprised of 'B', 'C' and unclassified roads with 39 border crossing points.¹² There are only two 'A' class roads. The A1 on the eastern boundary of the DEA is a major route included in the Northern Ireland Strategic Road Network providing transit between the south of Ireland and Newry city. The A37 is a 3.4 mile section of road which runs through the village of Cullaville approximately 2 miles south of Crossmaglen, located at the southern border of the DEA. This connects the N53, the Republic of Ireland's national secondary road network, between Dundalk in County Louth and Castleblaney in County Monaghan. A seamless cross border policing model is required in order to effectively prevent harm in communities, bring offenders to justice and reduce risk to police officers.

⁹ Department of Environment, December 1991

¹⁰ Newry, Mourne and Down Development Plan 2030, Preferred Options Paper, June 2018

¹¹ Information from – Police Consultation; Newry, Mourne and Down Development Plan 2030; Observation

¹² Border Crossing Points 9A – 41, Police Service of Northern Ireland ESRI Mapping

The Northern Ireland Multiple Deprivation Measure 2017 assesses standards of living and prosperity in communities, taking into consideration factors such as income, employment, health, education, access to services, living environment and crime and disorder.¹³ Within this Measure, the localities of Creggan, Forkhill, Silver Bridge and Newtownhamilton feature within the top 25% of areas of deprivation in Northern Ireland. Crossmaglen is ranked within the top 10%, making it the most deprived area in Newry, Mourne and Down District.

Additionally, four out of the top five most income deprived areas across Northern Ireland are situated in South Armagh.¹⁴ Levels of relative poverty experienced in South Armagh are reinforced by the findings of the Community Prioritisation Index (CPI) 2017. This research aims to engage disenfranchised groups who have little or no relationship with the police or other social partners in order to promote social cohesion. Localities within electoral ward areas of Mullaghbane,¹⁵ Forkhill, Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton

are ranked at 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 5th and 13th out of 890 comparative areas in Northern Ireland in relation to income deprivation. The CPI Report emphasises that, *“economic inequality ha[s] a particularly strong association with criminality”* and that *“economic conditions have served as a leading and robust predictor of conflict throughout quantitative literature on political violence”*.¹⁶

The socio-economic context impacts on community wellbeing and is therefore very relevant to our policing with the community approach. Investment and a focus on partnership interventions is required to support community infrastructure.

¹³ www.nisra.gov.uk

¹⁴ Creggan #1, Forkhill 2 #2, Silver Bridge 1 #3 and Crossmaglen #5

¹⁵ Creggan and Silver Bridge 1

¹⁶ CPI Report 2017, Dr Kevin Cunningham Ireland Links with Police Service of Northern Ireland, January 2018, Page 312

Crime and Reporting ¹⁷

¹⁷ Data in this section is informed by an analysis report produced for the South Armagh Review by South Area Analysis Unit, June 2020

Reactive policing demand in the area is low. Underreporting, associated with low levels of trust and confidence in local policing, is an issue that was acknowledged by both internal and external stakeholders during consultation.

“9 out of 10 people won’t ring police as they either won’t turn up or won’t get back to give answers.”

- *Elected Representative*

“People would have a break in and wouldn’t report it. This is local people, not republicans. There is no credibility there.”

- *Local Representative*

“I hear all the time, there is no point in ringing police. If you don’t catch them at the time, they are away.”

- *Elected Representative*

Over the last five years there has been an upward trend in the number of calls for service received in South Armagh, consistent with patterns across both D District and the Service. The daily average number of calls for service stands at 15.39 with 14.8 of these received from the Newtownhamilton local policing area and only 1.21 from the Crossmaglen local policing area.

Within these figures, an average of 0.53 emergency calls are received by Newtownhamilton and 0.03 by Crossmaglen each day.

Between 2015 and 2020 Crossmaglen has experienced a fall in the number of calls for service.

Calls for Service

Year	Newtonhamilton	Crossmaglen	Total
2015/16	4693	460	5153
2016/17	4962	405	5367
2017/18	5053	397	5450
2018/19	5507	509	6016
2019/20	5701	438	6139
Total	25916	2209	28125

Emergency Calls

Year	Newtonhamilton	Crossmaglen	Total
2015/16	241	15	256
2016/17	125	14	139
2017/18	143	8	151
2018/19	155	7	162
2019/20	305	16	321
Total	969	60	1029

Calls that Required a Response

Year	Newtonhamilton	Crossmaglen	Total
2015/16	3243	272	3515
2016/17	3057	251	3308
2017/18	2896	215	3111
2018/19	3063	296	3359
2019/20	3944	297	4220
Total	16203	1310	17513

Over the last five years, South Armagh has accounted for 12.6% of all crime in D District with an average daily crime level of 2.86 crimes (2.63 in Newtownhamilton and 0.23 in Crossmaglen).¹⁸

91.8% of all crime in South Armagh is reported as occurring outside of the Crossmaglen local policing area.

Crime

Year	Newtownhamilton	Crossmaglen	Total
2015/16	1052	110	1162
2016/17	957	81	1038
2017/18	847	57	904
2018/19	928	98	1026
2019/20	1020	83	1103
Total	4804	429	5233

The following crime types occur at a higher rate than the 12.6% overall contribution to the District crime rate: theft/burglary (21.9%), miscellaneous crimes against society (19.1%)¹⁹, drug offences (17.2%), possession of weapons offences (16.9%) and sexual offences (14.4%).

Burglary accounts for 7% of all crime in D District however this increases to 13% across South

Armagh. 93.1% of reported burglary in South Armagh occurred in Newtownhamilton area. Dangerous driving is the most prevalent offence type within the 'miscellaneous crimes against society' category. This accounts for 24.1% of all dangerous driving in D District and, whilst the trend has been downwards, it represents a significantly higher percentage contribution than overall crime levels.²⁰

¹⁸ This compares with an average District crime level of 22.74. For comparison Lisnaskea LPC averaged 1.17 daily crimes and Strabane LPC 4.42.

¹⁹ Includes 22 sub-categories

²⁰ A total of 85 offences were recorded in the 5 year period (2015-20). A breakdown of circumstances/further categorisation is not readily accessible from police information systems and would require stand-alone analysis of individual incidents. Of note, 78% (66) were recorded as Niche RM occurrences rather than Control Works incidents which would indicate that they are more likely to have been as a result of officer detection in various circumstances rather than RTC. Of the 19 incidents recorded on Command and Control/Control Works systems only 2 related to an RTC, with the majority being a fail to stop/pursuit scenario.

Drugs offences have seen a significant upward trend in the last 5 years with 95.9% of all drugs offences in South Armagh occurring in Newtownhamilton local policing area. During the same period there has been a downward trend in the Crossmaglen area. Based on police records, cannabis remains the most prolific drug and has been linked to 81.9% of offences. Information obtained during consultation would, however, indicate that higher classification drugs are a more prevalent issue than is represented by information currently accessible to local police.

88% of weapons possession offences occurred in Newtownhamilton local policing area, increasing in frequency since

2015/16. Numbers remain relatively low and there has been a general downward trend across South Armagh over the last five years.²¹

Sexual Offences have increased significantly since 2015, partly explained by historical and large scale national investigations.

During the last five years the anti-social behaviour trend in South Armagh has been upward, accounting for 8.4% of all ASB incidents in D District. The most recent data shows that this figure has risen to 11.1%. Daily anti-social behaviour reports averaged at 1.06 incidents in Newtownhamilton and 0.05 incidents in Crossmaglen.²²

ASB

Year	Newtownhamilton	Crossmaglen	Total
2015/16	314	9	323
2016/17	409	20	429
2017/18	379	26	405
2018/19	369	25	394
2019/20	470	15	485
Total	1941	95	2036

²¹ A total of 74 weapons possession offences were recorded in 5 year period (2015-20). 31% (23) of these related to firearms offences and 69% (51) to other weapons including blade or point.

²² D District incident total 13.20; South Armagh incident total 1.11; Lisnaskea incident total 0.61; Strabane incident total 2.32.

Over the past five years South Armagh has accounted for 13.14% of all domestic motivated crime in D District. The five-year trend for domestic motivated crime has been upward (rising to 15.49%), reflecting both D District and Service trends. Concerningly, domestic reporting in Crossmaglen local policing area has fallen by 52% in the same period.

Domestic abuse is an organisational priority due to the harm it causes to individuals and families. Whilst relatively low numbers can make the scale of downward trend more pronounced, it can be assumed that there is a significant level of underreporting in this area.²³

“There are examples of people with a long history of abuse from a partner in this area. There is no justice and nobody visibly saying, ‘we are here, speak to us and we will help and support you’. People won’t make statements here, because they believe nothing will be done and they will get in bother. They feel contacting the police will make the situation worse.”

- Elected Representative

“Discreet intervention work is required as confidence in police is likely to be a factor affecting reporting rates...We know it is happening but there are very, very low reporting levels [exacerbated by the rural nature of the area]. This makes reporting very emotionally sensitive and requires confidence.”

- PCSP Manager

Domestic Crime

Year	Newtonhamilton	Crossmaglen	Total
2015/16	138	21	159
2016/17	132	18	150
2017/18	144	14	158
2018/19	185	11	196
2019/20	159	10	169
Total	758	74	832

²³ Average daily domesticated crime levels - D District 3.47, South Armagh 0.45, Newtownhamilton 0.41 and Crossmaglen 0.04

Influence of the Past

Issues of trust, confidence and the prevailing influence of the past on relationships between police and the local community are central to this Review. Media reporting in December 2019 and January 2020 pointed to a disconnect between the style and tone of policing delivery and the expectations of the public. The prevalent message was a criticism of a militaristic police culture which, *“strongly emphasise[s] the past rather than the future of policing in the border region”*.²⁴ The terms ‘offensive’ and ‘hurtful’ were printed across multiple publications. Crossmaglen residents interviewed by the Belfast Telegraph in December 2019 described the present relationship between PSNI and local residents as ‘distant’. The Police Service was criticised for, *“continuing to treat the area as a militarized zone where community policing is practically non-existent...You see little effort of actual policing on the ground...It’s no different here than anywhere else. Acting as if it’s a military operation is not the policing operation you want to see, it’s totally uncalled for.”*²⁵

Elected representatives were vocal in supporting this perspective and in advocating for change. Sinn Fein MLA Conor Murphy was quoted,

*“The heavily armed officers posing with the Chief Constable is reflective of the militaristic style of policing that the community has had to endure in recent years... We need a new chapter for policing in South Armagh. We need an end to fortified police stations, heavily armed officers and poor response levels. We need a police service that serves the interests of this community in an efficient, effective and respectful manner.”*²⁶

SDLP Councillor Pete Byrne reinforced these sentiments and commented on the social media post as a, *“deliberate attempt to set Crossmaglen and South Armagh as a place apart...Language and images like this flies in the face of the positive work that has been achieved.”*²⁷

Local police representatives emphasised the uniqueness of the policing environment in South Armagh. The generally accepted organisational position was that the style of policing delivery was necessary and proportionate to keep officers safe from a severe terrorist threat. Security measures, as pictured in the social media post, reflected the realities of policing in a high threat environment.

²⁴ Chief ought to reflect on his choice of imagery, Irish News, 28/12/2019

²⁵ NI police chief’s Christmas gun photo totally uncalled for: Crossmaglen residents, Belfast Telegraph, 28/12/2019

²⁶ ‘Offensive’: PSNI Chief criticised over photo, Irish Independent, 27/12/2019

²⁷ Nationalists slam PSNI Chief’s offensive festive tweet from Crossmaglen, Belfast Telegraph, 27/12/2019

Formal reporting at local, departmental and organisational level reflects this perspective:

“Policing this area is challenging and it has already seen immense change over the past 15-20 years. Whilst the ‘demilitarisation’ of policing is generally welcomed by the community, police still need to adopt appropriate strategies to effectively respond to calls for service. The severe threat from violent dissident republicans continues to place a substantial burden on policing delivery.”

- *Local Policing Team Report, July 2019*

“A level of normalisation and high visibility policing takes place where the opportunities present, according to an assessment of risk.”²⁸

- *Policing with the Community Branch, July 2019*

“The style of policing is different to anywhere else in the UK...There is a continuing need for PSNI to take additional security precautions when conducting patrols in some border areas”²⁹

- *Senior briefing on policing implications of EU Exit, November 2019*

In the past South Armagh was a dangerous place to police. It has been described as, *“one of the major battle fields between the IRA and British Army”*.³⁰ The term ‘Bandit Country’ was coined in 1975 by the then British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Merlin Rees to describe South Armagh; a term which to a certain extent remains in the public understanding today.

30 police officers were killed during terrorist incidents in the area between 1970 and 1993.³¹ 123 British soldiers, 75 members of the public and 10 members of the Provisional IRA South Armagh Brigade also lost their lives between 1970 and 1997.

1,255 bombings and 1,158 shootings were recorded within a ten mile radius of the geographic centre of South Armagh in the same period.³² As a consequence, South Armagh was heavily fortified with military infrastructure which was inextricably associated with policing.

Local residents interviewed in 2019 regarding their recollection of the era described it as, *“the most surreal place to live...the effect on daily life was stifling”*.³³

²⁸ DPC High Visibility - Good Practice Study, July 2019

²⁹ EU Exit Briefing Paper, 02/11/2019

³⁰ The surreal reality of life in ‘the most militarised area of western Europe’, *thejournal.ie*, 09/02/2019

³¹ South Armagh Report for Chief Constable History of Attacks, T/Inspector NPT, 01/01/2020

³² Wikipedia, accessed 10/09/2020

³³ The surreal reality of life in ‘the most militarised area of western Europe’, *thejournal.ie*, 02/09/2019

In an article in 2019, a local former footballer from Crossmaglen Rangers Gaelic Athletic Club (GAC), reflected on his memories of growing up in Crossmaglen during the Troubles, drawing parallels with the situation in Gaza and the West Bank and highlighting the trauma implications of growing up in a conflict environment, *“intimidation was an everyday reality for us”*.³⁴

The historic view of policing was confirmed during consultation, *“The RUC were just not acceptable to [the people of South Armagh] as a police service.”*³⁵

The continued impact and emotional legacy that the trauma of the past has on the local community and police consciousness should not be underestimated. *“There is a lot of hurt in the community.”*³⁶ This continues to influence relationships of trust and confidence today and should therefore be an important factor in policy and decision making going forward.

The potential implications of the UK’s exit from the European Union on the Irish/Northern Irish border have received significant national and regional news coverage since 2016. 62.9% of voters in Newry and Armagh constituency voted Remain in the 2016 EU Exit Referendum. Local concerns about future policing arrangements associated with a hard border result in inevitable and unhelpful associations with the past. At the same time, uncertainty within policing over the future implications of EU Exit has arguably resulted in a reluctance to make changes to the local policing model in recent years.

³⁴ *Intimidation and checks: My trip to Palestine brought back memories of Crossmaglen during the Troubles, Oisín McConville, Cross GAC, thejournal.ie, 21/12/2019*

³⁵ *Elected Representative*

³⁶ *Community Worker*

Policing Developments 2005-2020

Demilitarisation, following the 1998 Good Friday Agreement, happened later in South Armagh than elsewhere in Northern Ireland. The last of the military security infrastructure was withdrawn from Crossmaglen Police Station in February 2007 with routine military support officially withdrawn in June 2007. Prior to that time, policing delivery in the area was supported by 450 soldiers, military observation towers and routine military helicopter support. The post-conflict policing transition had commenced in 2005 and formally continued until 2013, managed under a Normalisation Strategy.³⁷ This applied a phased approach, facilitating a gradual shift towards a community policing delivery model consistent with contemporary organisational development.

A formal Patrol Strategy was implemented in 2007, aiming, “to take policing forward in a manner which delivered an effective service to the community while addressing the challenges encountered by officers working in the area, including...officer protection.”³⁸ This provided for mobile vehicle patrol capability across the entire South Armagh area for the first time.

Resourcing ranged from 1-4 vehicles depending on a risk assessment which was primarily influenced by geographical location. Terrorist activity was acknowledged as having, “the potential to seriously impact the ability to sustain and progress the strategy.”³⁹

The prevailing context of a high threat from dissident republican activity in the area had an inevitable impact on progress. A number of explosive devices, shootings and attacks on police stations were experienced between 2009-2010 and 2012-2013. Arrangements were closely monitored on a daily and weekly basis as a means of mitigating risks to officer safety. Increased resources were secured to manage the frontline threat to officer safety and to protect neighbourhood policing service delivery.

During a review of the Patrol Strategy in 2013 it was assessed that, “the potential for public disorder within South Armagh remains high, either in the form of opportunistic attacks on patrols, in response to proactive operations or in the form of coordinated and organised attacks on police or police stations...Personnel stationed in Crossmaglen are deemed to be most at risk from this type of activity”⁴⁰

³⁷ Internal police records made available to the Review, 2005 - 2017

³⁸ 51/1 Internal Report from Area Commander South Armagh to District Operations Manager, 01/09/2013

³⁹ 51/1 Internal Report by Inspector South Armagh, Review of Normalisation Strategy – South Armagh, undated – circa 2008

⁴⁰ 51/1 Internal Reports 2007 and 2013 from Area Commander South Armagh to District Operations Manager, 01/09/2013

Dedicated Tactical Support Group (TSG), District Support Unit (DSU) and Air Support resources were routinely required to safely facilitate the delivery of daily policing functions.

Additional mitigations were implemented in relation to tasking protocols at the point of call for service.

The need to increase support for policing by means of partnership working and community initiatives is clearly referenced, with evidence of a focus on engaging with children and young people. It was specifically envisaged that neighbourhood policing activity had the potential to increase, in the event that the security threat decreased.⁴¹

In 2015, extensive restructuring was required to the organisation's frontline service delivery model to align the District Policing structure to the new 11 local District Council structure, established under the Local Government Review of Public Administration (RPA). A new operational policing model was

designed by a Police *ServiceFirst* RPA Project Team in collaboration with Area Coordinators, District Senior Management Teams and strategic stakeholders.⁴²

26 Local Policing Centres emerged with an enhanced role in engagement and problem solving that would traditionally have formed part of the neighbourhood policing portfolio. The number of neighbourhood teams was reduced accordingly to a total of 34, with a dedicated and critical support remit in areas of identified need.⁴³ The outcome for South Armagh was the creation of two Local Policing Teams (LPT), based in Newtownhamilton and Crossmaglen. This resulted in a total resource allocation of 5 Sergeants and 50 Constables. There was no longer any dedicated neighbourhood resource for the area, with the nearest of the three new District Neighbourhood Policing Teams (NPT) allocated to Newry. Bespoke arrangements were however put in place for South Armagh, outside of the operating model adopted elsewhere in the organisation:

⁴¹ 51/1 Internal Report, Area Commander South Armagh, September 2013

⁴² *ServiceFirst* RPA records made available to the Review.

⁴³ Organisationally, this reduced total dedicated Neighbourhood resourcing from 697 to 243 Constables with the concept that enhanced Local Policing Teams would now 'attend and engage' as part of their core role profile.

⁴⁴ This approach was also applied to Lisnaskea, Fermanagh and Omagh (G District)

⁴⁵ This represented double the standard service allocation of 1:10.

Increased DST resources were also allocated in Derry City and Strabane (1:15) and Belfast District (3:28)

- A Neighbourhood ‘Sector’ Inspector post was established to manage LPT activity.⁴⁴
- Additional District Support Team resources were allocated, with 2 Sergeants and 20 Constables. Whilst this was a District-wide allocation, the focus was on proactive policing delivery based on local intelligence and current threat and/or risk. South Armagh is likely to have been a predominant factor in the increased allocation on this basis.⁴⁵
- A small LPT was established in Crossmaglen, without a clear demand justification. The inference was that this was in response to enhanced security requirements in the area, retaining long-standing residential working arrangements.
- Newtownhamilton LPT received formal approval, on financial and operational grounds, to derogate from the corporate shift pattern and retain the 12 hour/4 section pattern. This resulted from local police representations regarding the financial backfill and security implications associated with the Patrolling Strategy and increased shift changeovers linked to the variable shift pattern. This decision was caveated with the intent to review towards the end of 2015. No records were found regarding a subsequent review of the 12 hour shift pattern.

- At a local level, outside of formal RPA processes, two officers were abstracted from LPT in Newry to provide dedicated neighbourhood support to South Armagh, with a focus on engagement with children and young people.

Despite promising progress in 2007, the increased security threat experienced in the period that followed and the structural impact of decisions under RPA resulted in a reduced neighbourhood and increased security focus for South Armagh.

This was exacerbated by a lack of leadership continuity, resulting in insufficient strategic focus on progress towards a normalised community policing model. A lack of broader perspectives, beyond those of local operational officers, may have inadvertently resulted in an acceptance of the status quo of policing in South Armagh.

The current Patrol Strategy documentation remains unchanged since 2013. There remains an absence of formal risk management structures and of the vision required to place community policing at the forefront of service delivery.

Current Policing Model

The main Local Policing Team for South Armagh operates from Newtownhamilton Police Station with a total establishment of 4 Sergeants and 40 Constables. Unlike LPT provision elsewhere in the Service, officers continue to work on a 12 hour/4 section shift pattern, commencing and terminating duty at Ardmore Police Station in Newry and travelling to Newtownhamilton using police vehicles. This is at odds with a recent organisational policy direction which deemed that the 12 hour/4 section shift pattern was not sufficiently responsive to facilitate service delivery outside of circumstances where exceptional resourcing pressures apply. This position was primarily based on operational effectiveness grounds but was also influenced by the organisation's duty of care to mitigate the long term health impacts caused by officers routinely working long hours.

An additional LPT establishment of 1 Sergeant and 10 Constables work from Crossmaglen Police Station on a residential shift pattern, accessing the station remotely using police vehicles from Ardmore, Newry. This involves officers living in the station on rotation over a 3-4 day period. This arrangement has its roots in the past and would have been common practice in border policing, aimed at minimising frequency and predictability of transit and the

risk of attack. Dedicated security measures are put in place to provide protection and support for police patrols during changeovers, coordinated on a weekly basis by the Crossmaglen LPT Sergeant. This involves abstraction of Neighbourhood, Newtownhamilton LPT and/or District Support Team resources from their primary roles three times per week to provide a dedicated presence on routes between Crossmaglen and Newry.

“It took a lot of time out of the day, juggling crews and competing demands – especially if a call came in. A lot of the role was about managing these logistics.”

- Former LPT Sergeant

Air Support is also provided, when available. Between 1st March 2019 and 29th February 2020 Air Support Unit was deployed on 45 occasions out of a total of 88 tasking requests. Reasons for not deploying would include weather conditions or higher priority competing demand. Records indicate that this equated to a total of 4,000 flying hours at an estimated cost of between £64,838 and £91,613, depending on the type of air asset that was deployed.⁴⁶

Objectively, shift patterns and travelling arrangements have become a matter of custom

⁴⁶ Information obtained from Air Support Review Team. Although deployments cannot be specifically attributed to changeover with any degree of certainty, the fact that all deployments occurred over peak changeover hours is persuasive.

and practice, rather than being proportionate to an evidence-based assessment of identified risks to officer safety. Arrangements are out of step with standard operational practice in 2020, even in areas where there is a higher level of security threat. Senior Management Team representatives acknowledge that there is no recent evidence or intelligence to indicate that there is any threat to stations or personnel.

The Crossmaglen team has very limited capacity to respond to calls for service or provide proactive policing activity due to the resource requirements stipulated in the Patrol Strategy. Consequently, the primary function of officers is to provide 24/7 station security and backfill to LPT sections in Newtownhamilton. Officers will lead on response to calls for service in the Crossmaglen and Cullaville areas, supported by LPT resources from Newtownhamilton.

Long working hours are built into the Crossmaglen working pattern with obvious wellbeing and health and safety implications. Standard working hours on a 3 day set of shifts (72 hour period) equate to a total of 34 hours, with 16 additional hours on stand-by during the night. Every other week, this will increase to 50 working hours and 24 overnight stand-by hours in a four day period (96 hours). The financial

cost to the organisation is widely recognised with Crossmaglen officers regularly featuring in the top earners of overtime in the service. In a 12 month period, 1st March 2019 – 1st February 2020, a total of 12,436.42 hours in overtime were worked by officers attached to Crossmaglen LPT.⁴⁷ This equates to a total cost of £254,200.43, the majority of which is incurred routinely within the shift pattern.⁴⁸

Since February 2020, a dedicated Neighbourhood Team has worked from Newtownhamilton Police Station, transiting on a daily basis from Newry. This additional resource of 1 Sergeant and 10 Constables was secured for South Armagh as part of the organisational neighbourhood policing uplift linked to EU Exit. Whilst this team has been abstracted from post until recently owing to the resourcing demands of the Covid-19 pandemic, this is a positive development providing much needed support to the two NPT officers who have continued to work in South Armagh since 2015. These two officers are to be commended for the contribution they have made to developing local relationships. Both are widely known by name and reputation; representing policing positively at a local level, with particular successes in schools and youth work programmes. Working flexibly and

⁴⁷ South Area Operational Planning

⁴⁸ Calculated using 2019/20 Ready Reckoner, based on Constable overtime rates – Financial Services Branch

on their own initiative, they have taken calculated risks to increase trust and confidence in policing.

“In our view [their] work has been excellent over the years. 7-8 years ago it may not have been possible for me to involve PSNI as a partner for fear of losing other partners. This is no longer the case and PSNI is seen as an accepted and standard partner agency.”

- *PCSP Manager*

The evident community receptiveness to these officers provides a strong indication of potential for further progress in increasing the support and engagement of local people. However, it also emphasises the dichotomy of cultures within local arrangements, with neighbourhood style policing a distinct and separate entity from predominant front line service delivery.

South Armagh is treated as a separate geographical and cultural entity from other areas in the District. In practice, it is permanently managed as an unofficial restricted patrolling area with officers outside the area not permitted to enter, unless under escort by local resources or in exceptional circumstances. The perceived danger of the area and

threats to officer safety are widely reinforced. This has had a significant impact on the mind-set of officers working in this environment and on wider organisational perspectives of policing in South Armagh. It may also explain why policing practice in South Armagh has fallen out of step with organisational developments in recent years.

Concurrently, a ‘laissez-faire’ leadership approach has developed over a 5-10 year period with deference to the perspectives of officers who are considered to have best insight on the area based on operational experience.

“The reality is that South Armagh has been left to be South Armagh. People don’t understand it and it is politicised. No one new went in and when there you didn’t really come out...It’s a different world where you don’t feel comfortable. That leaves us to take our lead from the Constables.”

- *Management Team*

“There is a real lack of understanding of the system, the people, the place...I don’t like the way it is policed. I want the job to change it.”

- *LPT Sergeant*

A hybrid management arrangement at Inspector level has resulted in a somewhat disjointed LPT structure. The 'sector' Inspector for South Armagh manages all policing activity in the area, with cover outside this officer's hours of working provided by LPT Duty Inspectors in Newry. The South Armagh Inspector works remotely from Newry with infrequent presence at a local level. Supervision at middle management level is therefore limited, especially as LPT resources in Newry are aligned to a different shift pattern. In practice South Armagh operates self-sufficiently, with the senior responsible officer on duty commonly the Duty Sergeant.

Until February 2020, the two dedicated NPT officers worked autonomously without day to day supervision. Until December 2019, it was common practice for some Sergeants to manage Newtownhamilton LPT remotely from Newry. This issue has since been resolved, however, was reflective of a culture that had limited appreciation of the significance of visible support and leadership.

Constables in Crossmaglen are afforded even less accessible supervision. The Crossmaglen Sergeant traditionally operates from Newry outside of the residential

shift pattern, primarily on weekdays during office hours. This stems from the Crossmaglen Sergeant's distinct role as Operations Sergeant for South Armagh, an events planning function retained outside of regional structures in place elsewhere in the organisation. The result has been that officers in Crossmaglen do not receive routine supervision or face to face briefing. Officers in Crossmaglen reported that they did not recall the last direct briefing that they had received.⁴⁹

Limited training has been provided to officers attached to South Armagh over an extended period. Until 3 years ago, no district training inputs were provided to officers over a 10 year period on the basis that changeover requirements and shift patterns made training delivery unfeasible. Under current arrangements, Newtownhamilton officers receive district training inputs 1-2 times per year and Crossmaglen once per year. This compares with standard Area level provision of five sessions annually to LPT officers. Training content is consolidated and condensed to align with this reduced allocation and this position is rationalised on the basis that officers experience fewer calls for service and already have the necessary skills for the role due to their length of service.

⁴⁹ Consultation 15/06/2020, acknowledged by Inspector 24/06/2020

Consultation with advocacy groups reinforced the importance of dedicated training inputs to ensure that officers understand the additional complexities faced by minority communities when they are victims of crime and the additional barriers faced by certain groups that can prevent engagement with police.⁵⁰

Academic research emphasises the importance of focused training on policing styles to develop the skillsets required to improve community relationships.⁵¹

Training and development is particularly important for officers working in South Armagh due to the complexity of addressing inherent trust and confidence issues. This requires a positive and respectful narrative on the local area with a balanced understanding of the past and emotional legacy issues which remain relevant to policing today. An enhanced focus on vulnerability is essential to prevent harm where there are additional barriers to engagement, particularly in this rural community setting.

Strategic oversight is required to ensure that continuous professional development is a priority and that a learning and development culture is embedded.

Senior leadership presence is very limited. Strategic engagement is primarily led at Sergeant and Inspector level. On coming into post in December 2019, the South Armagh Inspector does not appear to have been provided with a clear strategic vision, objectives or direction in the role. The cascade effect of this was noted during consultation with Sergeants and Constables.

“There was, or is, no plan in place to tell me what to do or where we should be going. I’m just making my own way on my own views.”

- *Sergeant*

“We could be a valuable resource but we’re not utilised. There is no strategy or guidance. Everything we do is by us alone.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

During consultation, the need for changes in policing strategy and practice in South Armagh was clearly acknowledged by the District Senior Management Team. However, there was no consensus on what needed to change and what proactive steps were required.

“There have been failings there, failings to grasp South Armagh. It’s been waiting for some time for someone to come and sort it out, that’s what it needs.”

- *LPT Sergeant*

⁵⁰ *Rainbow Project Advocacy Service*

⁵¹ *Review of Evidence: What effect do enforcement-orientated and engagement-orientated methods of visible policing have on public confidence? Scottish Institute for Policing Research, July 2018*

An enhanced leadership focus and targeted learning and development would greatly assist officers to progressively navigate the complexity of the policing environment. This is of critical importance moving forward, particularly due to the motivation, skill and support required to implement and embed recommendations agreed under this Review.

The Section 75 profile of officers working in South Armagh was examined. Community background and political opinion statistics show that the proportion of officers identifying as Catholic and nationalist is marginally higher than police service levels.⁵²

In terms of gender representation, 86.7% of officers working in the area are male and only 13.21% female. This is markedly lower than overall service statistics of 69.76% male and 30.24% female. A short distance away in Newry, gender representation is broadly consistent with organisational levels at 70.59% to 29.41%.⁵³ No female officers are attached to Crossmaglen LPT.

The age and length of service profile is notably different than in Newry. Only 5.66% of officers in South Armagh are aged 19-29 years and 28.30% are aged between 30-39 years, compared with 26.89% and 45.38% respectively in Newry. At the older age brackets, the reverse pattern is seen with 32.08% of South Armagh officers being aged between 40-49 years and 32.08% aged between 50-59 years, compared with only 21.01% and 5.88% respectively in Newry.⁵⁴

This pattern is replicated in terms of length of service with only 18.87% of officers in South Armagh having 0-5 years' service compared with 69.84% of officers in Newry. Higher proportions of new to service officers would be expected in front line policing roles. 50.94% of officers have between 5-10 years' service compared with only 14.29% in Newry. The 10-15 year service bracket is broadly comparable at 18.87% in South Armagh against 14.29% in Newry. A more notable difference can be seen in the 15-20 year service bracket with 11.32% in South Armagh against 1.59% in Newry.⁵⁵

⁵² Community Background Catholic: 39.62% South Armagh/31.13% Service. Political Opinion Nationalist: 5.66% South Armagh/4.44% Service

⁵³ Source: PSNI Equality and Diversity Unit

⁵⁴ Source: PSNI Equality and Diversity Unit

⁵⁵ Source: Workforce Planning 29/02/20

These differences are likely to be pertinent to officer perceptions and experiences of the area, limiting the diversity of perspectives available. This has, however, been confirmed as a conscious leadership decision with a local policy that probationary officers should not be allocated to work in South Armagh stations due to their inexperience and the perceived lack of development potential in the area.

Concern about the service profile and its impact on policing culture today was the subject of comment by an elected representative, *“The reality is that the personnel now is still made up of guys who were there in the 80s and 90s.”* Whilst this is not an accurate assessment, it provides evidence of community perceptions of local policing.

There were mixed views within the management team with indications that the extent of the age/service profile difference and potential impact of this on outlook and approach may not have been fully appreciated.

Performance

In the context of building trust and confidence, the need to continually demonstrate effectiveness is crucial. There is limited evidence of an effective performance culture or meaningful accountability structures at District or local level. This includes a lack of governance structures to link available performance measurements to community related outcomes or to inform activity and improve. There is also a lack of alignment to visibility, engagement or confidence building.

“South Armagh is monitored as an entity...It is a different policing environment than elsewhere and the performance culture and attitude is that you do just what you have to do...There is a certain trade off with the security risks that they are facing.”

- Management Team

“Historically there are low expectations. We are not compared to District but between ourselves for consistency between sections.”

- Management Team

Crime outcome rates for Slieve Gullion DEA in 2019/20 were broadly comparable with District standards, at 20.1% to 22.6% respectively.⁵⁶ Outcome rates across teams vary significantly; Crossmaglen LPT 5.4%, Newtownhamilton 19.2% and Newtownhamilton NPT 46.8%.⁵⁷

Organisationally, the expectation is that 90% of calls for service will be attended within Service Level Agreement timeframes of 15 minutes for emergency incidents and 60 minutes for non-emergency incidents. In a 12 month period June 2019 – May 2020, attendance times were achieved within Service Level Agreement (SLA) in 50.9% of emergency incidents and 74.6% of priority incidents across South Armagh. Broken down by station, Crossmaglen achieved attendance times in 36.4% of emergency incidents and 71.1% of priority incidents. Comparatively, Newtownhamilton attended 51.6% of emergency incidents and 74.8% of priority incidents within SLA.⁵⁸

⁵⁶ Service Outcome rate for 2019/20 Financial Year was 28.5% - Statistics Branch

⁵⁷ Source: South Area PQA Team

⁵⁸ PQA records, June 2019 – May 2020

Vehicle activity analysis for the months of January – March 2020 demonstrates vehicle patrol activity across the wider geographical area. The main density, however, was on primary access routes between Newry and Newtownhamilton. Thereafter, the main vehicle density was found to be on routes between Crossmaglen and Newry and Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton. This indicates a transit approach to patrol around police stations.⁵⁹

In an 11 month period, April 2019 – February 2020, Crossmaglen LPT conducted a total of 17 arrests representing 1% of the District total. Newtownhamilton LPT conducted proportionately more, with 194 arrests in the same period, equating to 13% of total arrests in the District.⁶⁰ These figures should be considered in the context of District establishment levels – Crossmaglen LPT establishment represents 3.86% and Newtownhamilton LPT establishment 15.45% of the total LPT resourcing establishment across D District.⁶¹

By way of indicative investigative demand, on 30/06/2020 Crossmaglen officers had 13 live case files compared with Newtownhamilton officers who had 64. Against establishment this equates to less than two case file investigations per officer at any one time.⁶²

Newtownhamilton LPT issued a total of 111 Community Resolution Notices (CRN) and 9 Penalty Notices for Disorder (PND) in the 2019/20 financial year. Crossmaglen LPT issued 6 CRNs, exclusively by one of the two sections. No PNDs were issued by the Crossmaglen team in this period. Comparatively Newtownhamilton NPT issued 31 CRNs in the same period, despite only coming into existence in February 2020.⁶³

⁵⁹ *Locate Mapping, accessed 03/06/2020*

⁶⁰ *NISRA, PACE arrests*

⁶¹ *HR Establishment vs Actuals – total D District Constables/Sergeant establishment 285 officers*

⁶² *Source PRIDE CMIS, 30/06/2020*

⁶³ *FY 2019/20 until 22/03/2020, source South Area PQA*

Driving standards and risk of harm on the roads were highlighted as a specific issue of local concern during both internal and external consultation. In a 12 month period (2019/20) Crossmaglen LPT made only 5 traffic offence detections involving drugs and/or alcohol (1.57% of the District total) and Newtownhamilton LPT made 50 detections (16% of the District total).⁶⁴ Preliminary Breath Testing devices issued to Crossmaglen LPT were used 89 times in the same period.⁶⁵ This represents a significant increase on the preceding 12 months where use was recorded on only 27 occasions. 92 Fixed Penalty Notices were issued in South Armagh in 2019/20; 82 by Newtownhamilton LPT and 11 by Crossmaglen LPT.⁶⁶

170 premises searches were conducted across D District in the 2019 calendar year, primarily under PACE (NI) Order 1989 and Section 23 Misuse of Drugs Act 1971.⁶⁷ 40 of these took place in South Armagh with only one led by a local South Armagh resource.⁶⁸ The tendency for Tactical Support Group (TSG) resources to lead on searches in the area is likely to have an impact on

community perceptions of a 'heavy handed' local policing style.⁶⁹

1,606 stop and searches were carried out in D District between April 2019 and December 2019. Within this period Crossmaglen LPT used stop and search powers on 6 occasions and Newtownhamilton LPT on 166 occasions.⁷⁰ The regularity in which body worn video technology is carried will inevitably have an impact on accountability assurance. D District personnel signed out body worn video cameras on 11,767 occasions during 2019/20.⁷¹ Crossmaglen LPT accounted for only 41 of these occasions, roughly calculated at 4 times per officer in a 12 month period. Newtownhamilton LPT used this technology more regularly, on 1,395 occasions, approximated at 35 times per officer based on establishment.

“The reality is that there are not a lot of calls so there is a real opportunity to invest in some focused work. There are no real directions or themes to focus on.”

- LPT Sergeant

⁶⁴ Source: Niche, FY 2019/20. Saturn does not have the facility to provide detail beyond District level.

⁶⁵ Lion 500 Serial Numbers 68476 and 68456.

Figures cannot be obtained for Newtownhamilton as they access pool devices also used by Ardmore/Newry resources.

⁶⁶ Potential for margins of inaccuracy due to the recording mechanism for FPNs which relies on street address rather than DEA.

⁶⁷ Form 29 records collated by South Area CTC

⁶⁸ TSG x 31, DST x 6 (various teams South Area), NPT Newry x1, NPT Downpatrickx1, NPT Newtownhamilton x 1

⁶⁹ This terminology and equivalents such as 'over the top' were repeatedly referenced during external consultation

⁷⁰ NISRA, 16/03/20: April 2019 - December 2019. Legislative basis: Crossmaglen - PACE x 2, Misuse of Drugs Act x 3, Justice and Security Act x1. PQA records indicate that these were exclusively conducted by 1 of the 2 sections attached to Crossmaglen. Newtownhamilton - PACE x 18, Misuse of Drugs x 121 and Justice and Security Act x 27.

⁷¹ Accessed via Miscellaneous Reports Application

Significant concerns were highlighted by elected representatives from across the political spectrum regarding responsiveness to calls for service.

“From my experience, as an elected representative, the issue of police response is an issue which has been fed back to me.”

- Elected Representative

“Complaints are received about the 101 and response times... [The] drugs culture developing in villages and towns is a big issue along with the perception that police are not doing anything. It’s a confidence issue.”

- Elected Representative

“Response is definitely an issue. We meet police on the road with 5 or 6 cars and it is hard to get into your head why they can’t respond when we need them. Why the whole lot are coming together from Newry all the time, it’s hard to understand. They’ll come in, do a dash round and come out again. Anyone involved in rallying or drugs sees them come in and out and they know it’s a free for all.”

- Elected Representative

“The main issue is resource and response times. A few incidents have been brought to my attention where complaints were raised that police were not responding quick enough. There were other issues ongoing for police at the time but it did highlight that there was not someone readily available only round the corner from the station.”

- Elected Representative

“I want police that are efficient, that turn up. It’s no good landing in after two days to vulnerable people who need help now.”

- Elected Representative

“There are community police officers who work with [us]... and they are brilliant...The other police is a different story. We have encouraged the Residents’ Association...to report issues but we are finding the response is, ‘not youse again, what do you expect us to do?’ By the time they get out and respond the issue will have gone away. There is a massive station in the centre of town but it takes them far too long to respond and we know they are inside.”

- Community Association Representative

“There are complaints about response times – there is no doubt about that...On the other hand I have had a number of families who have lost people in accidents or tragic situations and they have been very happy with the police response and support. That praise should be acknowledged. The fact that police are experienced as incredibly supportive is good.”

- Elected Representative

“The reason given by police for not attending was the dissident threat level.”

- Elected Representative

“We need a response within a reasonable time when we call you, coming out even on the same evening would be good. Response times differ and there are clearly checks being made to see what has been rang in, is it safe? Safety of officers is always the answer – Crossmaglen and South Armagh are considered more unsafe than elsewhere. Checks are delaying or preventing response and driving a further wedge between police and the community.”

- Elected Representative

Security First Culture

The general threat from Northern Ireland Related Terrorism is assessed as SEVERE, a level which has persisted since 2009 and is reflected on the Police Service NI's Corporate Risk Register. In 2019/20, 53 security related incidents were recorded across Northern Ireland, none of which occurred in South Armagh. There were no recorded security related shooting incidents, paramilitary style attacks or incidents involving explosive devices. No person residing in the area was detained and charged under Section 41 Terrorism Act 2000. In the last 5 years there have been a total of 5 terrorism related searches and 1 arrest. The last terrorist incident occurred in 2015.⁷² There has been one officer attached to South Armagh who was moved out of their home under the SPED Scheme over the past 5 years.⁷³

The main threat to officer safety is generally acknowledged to emanate from organised criminality, associated with the border location and risk of serious injury on the roads. This is a reactive threat to evade arrest during the course of criminal conduct rather than proactive targeting or a primary intent to cause injury or death to a police officer.

“You are armed and trained and have a counter terrorism budget and this is a criminal gang who present more danger to us and our community than police. They are fed information that the threat is so high yet we know it virtually doesn't exist and it is having a big impact on how they police – their response and their attitude. There is a lack of response.”

- Elected Representative

During internal consultation, there was broad consensus that the threat level experienced in South Armagh is lower than in other policing areas.⁷⁴ This was confirmed by formal reporting and analysis. An historic and anecdotal understanding of threat and risk was, however, found to persist. Distorted perceptions resulted in disproportionate tactical mitigations, bringing security to the forefront of policing delivery.

⁷² *Terrorism Investigation Unit, 2015 - 2020*

⁷³ *Special Purchase of Evacuated Dwellings, 2016. as confirmed by Security Branch, 07/04/20*

⁷⁴ *Including Derry/Londonderry, Lurgan and parts of Belfast*

Academic literature on the impact of trauma and reconciliation highlights that unconscious bias of this nature is a common predicament with assumptions and habits becoming so deeply rooted that they are taken for granted as normal. *“After so many years, our understanding of each other...too often relies on received or second-hand knowledge or presumptions shaped by trauma...Fear and anger can be passed down...and can influence perceptions of the world and of others...building a sense of identity and...community that rests on a stark separation between safe inside and a threatening outside.”*⁷⁵

Across all roles and ranks, the predominant narrative expressed during consultation was one of fear and mistrust linked to legacy of the past. Routine security measures within the day to day policing delivery model served to increase perceptions of threat and risk rather than create reassurance. Logistical concerns were expressed in relation to the border location and rural geography, particularly the vulnerability of police officers in the absence of readily available support from additional police resources. The main focus was to protect police rather than to deliver visible, accessible, responsive and community focused service.

There were, however, a number of officers across ranks who had an alternative perspective, expressing views contrary to the prevalent mind-set. These tended to be newer, NPT officers or those who had experienced policing in other areas.

“There is a threat across the province but I don’t feel it as strongly here as elsewhere. [In other places] you can actually feel the tension and I haven’t felt that here. Crossmaglen doesn’t compare with Creggan or the New Lodge. That isn’t a widely shared view but officers in South Armagh have been there a very long time and it has been that way, almost an entrenched mind-set that doesn’t take into account that things have changed.”

- Sergeant

“Security is inhibiting the mind-set in Crossmaglen and I would have felt that in Newtownhamilton.”

- Constable

“[There is a general] feeling that it is dangerous and that there is a good chance that something could happen. There is an expectation that whoever you deal with is going to be a problem but that hasn’t been my experience. It is an older mentality and we are a younger team.”

- Constable

⁷⁵ *Emotional Reconciliation: Reconstituting Identity and Community after Trauma, European Journal of Social Theory, 2008, 11:3, 386-391*

“The last terrorist related incidents were a long time ago yet policing is a bit like Groundhog Day... There is no evidence or intelligence to indicate there is any threat to the station or transiting personnel... When do we get to the point when we can trust enough to act?”

- *Management Team*

There has been a lack of regular, locally relevant intelligence briefing to officers working in the area over a number of years. During consultation no operational officer was able to recall a direct briefing. Available information was generic, obtained using police systems rather than being area specific. This will undoubtedly have contributed to an inconsistent and inaccurate understanding of security threats and risks. Until recently, C3 operated a District briefing cycle to provide regular information directly to operational officers. Although this practice has been suspended due to Covid-19, records indicate that five such briefings were delivered to officers attached to D District between January and March 2020.⁷⁶ The breakdown appears to have happened at the local coordination level, as no South Armagh officers have received the benefit of such a brief.

This security mind-set inevitably influences the approach to day to day policing delivery. This is evidenced by police misgivings which were expressed about the local community safety networks. There is a clear sense of community cohesion in South Armagh. Local people are actively involved in community safety owing to long term low levels of trust and confidence in responsive and effective service delivery. In a context where suspicion and mistrust exists, legitimate community interaction and activity associated with a close knit infrastructure can at times be misinterpreted.

“The threats are different here. We are observed all the time.”

- *Management Team*

“We are still watched and our movements monitored from the square. People are getting paid to do that. When we leave people they will be approached and asked to relay what has been discussed.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

“There is still some sort of community infrastructure that allows them to react quickly and rapidly into the area, gathering large numbers of people...”

- *LPT Constable Newtownhamilton*

⁷⁶ Information provided by Area Intelligence Hub Coordinator, 26/06/20

“There is no doubt the Crossmaglen community is tight knit and can summon to action its inhabitants at a moments’ notice...[using] what’s app groups....”

- *LPT Constable Newtownhamilton*

The community perception was somewhat different:

“There is an active community spirit with participation and togetherness.”

- *School Principal*

“South Armagh at one time had localised community safety groups. They weren’t vigilantes but people in the community who kept each other informed.”

- *Community Restorative Justice Representatives*

“There is no appetite for any harm to come to anyone in PSNI.”

- *Elected Representative*

“There is no threat in the area that exists towards you and there hasn’t been for many years.”

- *Elected Representative*

“We live in the area, we know how conflict operates. I can tell you [a threat from terrorism] doesn’t exist; all we have here is a small amount of criminal gangs.”

- *Elected Representative*

“Nobody wants to get you..We can’t do any more to show our support...To us, there is not a lot more on the ground we can do to say police are safe and there is no issue. In my time, there has been no issue. We have been very proactive in terms of seeking to normalise policing.”

- *Elected Representative*

“The people of South Armagh deserve better policing, we need better policing. We’re sick to death of hearing excuses about this being a terrorist area with a dissident threat. It doesn’t wash at all. The threat in South Armagh is from criminal gangs. Police know that and we know that.”

- *Elected Representative*

“It is a myth that people don’t want police – every society needs and is entitled to a police force. We have walked through villages with your officers. They have been taken to community events at the invitation of the community. This label of severe threat on us – I don’t see evidence of it on the ground...If I thought there was risk I wouldn’t be standing beside you...I’m not sure what it is that we need to be able to prove to you that you are wanted and needed in South Armagh.”

- Elected Representative

“Due to the geographical set up, a raid involving 10 police land rovers doesn’t work. If you come in from Bessbrook, as soon as you get to Belleeks a message will have got through. Not necessarily connected people trying to frustrate the police, it’s just the spread of information locally. You have to understand that it is such a foreign sight/idea to see a load of police coming into the area which makes it a talking point.”

- Elected Representative

“Recently locals caught people involved in robberies...but it happens because of the lack of response. People shouldn’t have to catch people and tie them up waiting for police in this day and age.”

- Elected Representative

“Last year culprits were apprehended by local people and again that raises questions. It doesn’t bode well or give confidence in police.”

- Local Resident

“We have a strong network of communities and this is key to how we move policing forward. Anything that elected reps can do to be a conduit we need to do. There is a commitment and a willingness to move forward...South Armagh is a great place to live with great communities who all want the same thing for our families. We need to work cohesively to achieve that.”

- Elected Representative

A minority of officers had an outlook which aligned to this:

“There is a very strong sense of community in South Armagh and it is about how to harness that.”

- Sergeant

“We need to work better with the local community infrastructure... Groups...are community minded and would work with police in the right circumstances.”

- Management Team

A five year programme of mediated dialogues on policing and community relationships in Northern Ireland between 1996 and 2003, conducted by Mediation Northern Ireland and an Ulster University Action Research Programme provides relevant insight.⁷⁷

“The primary effect of violent political crisis in Northern Ireland ... was to radically prioritise issues of self-defence and security over other considerations...One of the most obvious consequences was ... a semi-permanent ‘presumption for suspicion’...The resulting impact on the culture of policing was profound. Relationships with huge parts of community, especially where ‘the enemy’ was embedded, were infected by an almost unavoidable climate of suspicion and even hostility...[This] spawned a pattern of policing whole areas defined by the presumed risk of violence from specific, but unpredictable, quarters in the community. Over time, commitments to equal service were increasingly implausible, despite formal protestations to the contrary and enormous efforts on the part of some to maintain service and relationship...Worse still, the logic of security creates a context within which tactics which appear unacceptable in a context of fundamental trust, become acceptable, even necessary.”⁷⁸

These issues are referred to later in this report, under the Engagement section heading.

⁷⁷ At that time University of Ulster

⁷⁸ Systemic Change in Northern Ireland, Policing our Divided Society (PODS) 1996 – 2003: 1191

Discussions during consultation about the policing purpose and rationale for the current policing model provided useful insight into the internal mind-set:

“There are some influential officers maintaining the status quo... [and] perpetuating the myth...The mind-set is stuck...”

- *Management Team*

“There is a confrontation mind-set in South Armagh- it’s stereotyping... to expect certain behaviour from a certain group.”

- *NPT Constable referring to police officers*

When asked why we police it that way, **“honestly, because it is South Armagh and the ‘bandit country’ connotations that go along with that...It’s because there have been so many atrocities over the years... the name conjures up images in people’s minds.”**

- *LPT Sergeant*

There is a fundamental issue regarding the police mind-set and culture at both a local and organisational level, which must be purposefully addressed as the basis for meaningful change.

“For the community South Armagh means so much more than 30 years of conflict - [there is] pride in area, it’s so much more than that.”

- *Elected Representative*

There is an ‘us and them narrative’ and it needs tackled.”

- *Elected Representative*

“There are examples of police doing a good professional job when they come out. There was a number of officers in Crossmaglen that were passionate about the community and doing the right thing but it always felt there was an element in the other side that aren’t approaching it from that good perspective.”

- *Elected Representative*

“[NPT] are all very friendly guys... but some of the other guys who are out patrolling are not friendly and people are just not going to speak to them. They don’t reflect what the community want police to be.”

- *Elected Representative*

Style and Tone of Delivery

Academic research conducted in collaboration with Police Scotland on the effect of enforcement-orientated and engagement-orientated methods of visible policing on public confidence found that the style of policing has serious implications for police community relationships and in how police are viewed and engaged locally.

Repeated use of enforcement-based styles have a negative impact on police community relations by increasing mistrust and acting as a barrier to engagement, whilst familiarity and positive communication can enhance public confidence.⁷⁹

There was general acknowledgement by local officers that local community representatives had for some time been dissatisfied with the style, tone and proportionality of policing methods.

“The feedback we get is clear - [they are] not happy with the policing style as it is over the top... They are right when they say, ‘we are policed differently’. This can be seen in the scale of resources and operations...The conditions are right to make a change.”

- Chief Inspector

It was also accepted, to varying degrees, that current arrangements were inhibiting service delivery and progress.

“I accept maybe we haven’t gone far enough despite our attempts.”

- Chief Inspector

⁷⁹ *Review of Evidence: What effect do enforcement-orientated and engagement-orientated methods of visible policing have on public confidence? Scottish Institute for Policing Research, July 2018*

“The policing of this area should be no different to that of other areas across the North. This type of response is a fundamental barrier to reducing the deficit of trust and building confidence in the PSNI in South Armagh.”

- PCSP Independent Member

“They are still following the policing model that was always there. It may have been difficult to transform from a paramilitary police force to a community police force. It is still the same, the model is still the same.”

- Elected Representative

“...It is my job to build confidence and trust in PSNI given the history. Today they come in hard cars, heavily armed, into heavily fortified bases. They are still policing from outside the area. It is hard to get through to people that things have changed when visually not a lot has.”

- Elected Representative

“I do recognise that there may be incidents where you need that level of resource but it also has to be a measured approach. It is hard to explain the current approach... There needs to be a valid reason and where there is such a reason then there needs to be community engagement and communication to explain this.”

- Elected Representative

“There definitely should be more community policing and less security, I just do not see the justification for it...When was the last attack on an officer or a station in the area? School children have no living memory but still a hell of a budget spent in the wrong places.”

- Elected Representative

Resourcing and Patrolling

The current Patrol Strategy stipulates an 8 officers/4 vehicle patrol attendance at even routine calls for service in some areas. This is decided primarily on the basis of a risk assessment influenced by the location of call for service. In basic terms, incidents further south, in closer proximity to the border, receive increased resource. The style and tone can be perceived as “unapproachable and intimidating”⁸⁰ with convoys of armoured vehicles the predominant visible police presence. The coordination of this resource inevitably results in delays in attendance, with an impact on perceptions of responsiveness and effectiveness.

The proportionality of tactics was questioned during consultation:

“It should not look like a convoy of armoured cars. There is a military tone from the past and elements of that style of policing which can be seen in the convoy of armoured cars.”

- *Sergeant*

“Travelling with four cars in convoy is no good. It actually puts people at risk and goes against us in community meetings.”

- *Sergeant*

“Two Neighbourhood Constables go to events on their own. In Keady, a couple of miles away, they are going to calls in one car.”

- *Chief Inspector*

“South Armagh may have a one size fits all approach... the default patrolling position needs to be more responsive and agile to change. The security environment can override everything and in the end it takes us a step back.”

- *Superintendent*

⁸⁰ LPT Inspector, Newry

There was a pragmatic approach taken by many in relation to the potential for reduction:

“We could have a lesser footprint at call attendance but with the reassurance of support nearby.”

- Chief Inspector

“In my opinion it is time for a review of the 4-car patrol policy... One should attend with the others a kilometre or two away.”

- Sergeant

“Ideally want four cars but achievable with two.”

- LPT Constable Crossmaglen

“Comfortable with two the majority of the time, depends on the time of day, location or inconsistencies in the report.”

- LPT Constable Crossmaglen

“We have informal authority to go out on our own without the support of Newtownhamilton. Locals are happier with this, they tighten up when four cars arrive and will make comment.”

- LPT Constable Crossmaglen

Some officers, however, argued that the increased resourcing model was both pragmatic and proportionate:

“The day it goes wrong, it goes massively wrong. Locals are capable when they want to get someone.”

- LPT Constable Crossmaglen

“Four car patrolling...is appropriate for attending calls when it would be easy to stage an attack... Impromptu patrolling should be two cars...assuming the officers know the area, know their limitations, know where the border is and acknowledge that back-up, should something go wrong, is at least 30 minutes away.”

- LPT Constable Crossmaglen

“... [T]here is more opportunity to catch people...[W]e can have most routes covered with stinger points etc. Really important otherwise you lose people over the border.”

- LPT Constable Newtownhamilton

Community representatives did not agree:

“When you do respond it is in a counter-insurgency style with a 4-car convoy and helicopter support. There is no community safety focus and it is a fundamental deficit.”

- Elected Representative

“My observation is that policing could and should be better...Police arrive in this area in convoy and leave in convoy very shortly after that. I know there are difficulties but I would like to think we have left a lot of stuff behind us...3-4 heavily armoured cars drive up to the barracks and drive out. It’s not good policing. ”

- Local Resident

“When I first started...I thought nothing of bringing police to an event...Police arrived in convoy and held a check point outside the community centre...The reaction was very hostile...I haven’t really worked with police since because it is counterproductive to the work I am trying to do.”

- Youth Worker

“Big operations with the helicopter feed into the narrative that we are a place apart – it’s heavy handed. People either see that or nothing. Where is the day to day policing?”

- Elected Representative

“We don’t have passing patrols here unless they are going to raid a house. Then you see about eight cars loads together and you can normally tell what house they are going to.”

- Elected Representative

“If your visibility looks militaristic then this will create even greater resistance to communicating or having police at the house. Even recently at attempted burglaries, householders wouldn’t phone police. I advised them to but they point blank refused because they would not have an officer at or anywhere around their door.”

- Elected Representative

“If we don’t move from the military policing we won’t ever get the community on board.”

- Local Representative

Visibility

An academic research study on visible policing provides evidence that officers on foot and bicycle patrol are perceived as more approachable, friendly and accountable than those in cars. Evidence indicates that this approach allows them to gather more in-depth knowledge regarding crime and criminal behaviour on their 'beat'. Local knowledge assists police officers to make the correct decisions for each context thereby assisting officers to address local needs.⁸¹

During consultation, the visibility of police uniforms, vehicles and patrolling emerged as an issue of significant concern, provoking strong reaction both internally and externally.

“Visibility and presence is critical to knowing what is going on in a community. The quality of contact and positive experiences are key, along with appropriate use of discretion.”

- Elected Representative

“[We] need police visible and present. There is almost a call to arms feeling in the community because PSNI aren't doing what they need to do.”

- Elected Representative

“We want the same policing that people in Belfast, Newry or Derry get...It's not a case of them being happy with [visible policing], they are demanding it.”

- Elected Representative

“At least be there, be visible...My children wouldn't know what a policeman or woman looks like.”

- Elected Representative

“If you were in liveried cars and white shirts I don't see how the community would be against that. It would appear more natural as a force there to assist the community rather than the paramilitary style that you have now...When an ambulance arrives in the area you know it is an ambulance and the same applies to fire service and water service branded vehicles...You can still see from a distance that it is a police car but there will be no sign or markings. I think that would help things...For me normal policing would be cycling around Slieve Gullion interacting with tourists, standing in Jonesborough having a conversation whilst dressed normally as a civil servant.”

- Elected Representative

“We want to see police on the ground but we want to see proper policing. If we could get away from the 3-4 cars. If 2 or 3 police officers could walk up the street.”

- Elected Representative

⁸¹ Review of Evidence: What effect do enforcement-orientated and engagement-orientated methods of visible policing have on public confidence? Scottish Institute for Policing Research, July 2018:2

“I see police around in their cars, they would be spinning about. You would very seldom see them on foot, it’s not safe... [Marked cars] would help, it would make me feel safer. You don’t know who is trying to stop you. I would drive on in case it wasn’t really police. A woman alone out at night on country roads, I wouldn’t stop. Seeing them out and about would also make me feel more reassured and that is important.”

- Local Business Owner and Resident

“I do see them, but not regularly and not on foot patrol...I never see them walking up and down the street. They are in cars, closed off with darkened windows... Local officers need to be known better.”

- Elected Representative

“Even if a police car could sit in Dungormley estate for 10-15 minutes at night it would instil confidence that police are there.”

- Community Association Representative

“A community presence is needed in a lot of villages, at least the odd time. Even just walking or driving through the housing estate. I think if there was a more regular presence it would at least deter some of what is going on.”

- Elected Representative

“Well it definitely would be a big change. With the history I don’t know how it would be received if it just popped up. Although I’m not sure that anyone would be overly fussed. The only way to know is to try...There needs to be more of a presence, a visible presence which is not threatening...If you want to show presence and feel at ease you need to be seen.”

- Local Resident

“If they are there the public don’t know that or what they are doing. They need to be out engaging on foot patrol, talking to people and getting to know local people, checking that all is well - either on bikes or foot.”

- Elected Representative

“Personally I have always got a very good service when I have contacted police. They have been very good... [But] it would go a long way to easing people’s fears if police were to be seen more often, walking around the area...people would at least feel safer.”

- Community Worker

“I met with [local Inspector and Chief Inspector] and raised concern about the level of police on foot in streets and he gave me an assurance it would increase. It didn’t happen. The community would welcome police on foot or cycle patrol in yellow jackets and normal police cars. It would instil confidence in a lot of people.”

- Community Association Representative

“There is fear in the community so anything that can be done to show proactivity is vitally important. If the community feel they don’t see it and it’s not happening then it’s an issue.”

- Elected Representative

“Your colleagues say it’s not safe to walk around Crossmaglen and that’s nonsense. No political party would have any issues walking around Crossmaglen with any PSNI officer. This is something that needs debunked within your own staff.”

- Elected Representative

“We would mostly see police in cars and mostly at night. They are plain cars but you can tell they are police cars from quite a distance away.”

- Community Worker

“I’ve learnt to recognise some of their cars.”

- Youth Worker

“Visibility creates reassurance but it’s not great when carrying heavy armoury...It should feel a bit more like the mainland. I don’t think that is possible here from a safety perspective although it would create a safer impression of police and the area. The current physical presence does have an impact.”

- Elected Representative

The predominant officer perspective was, however, risk averse and demonstrated considerable resistance to the concept of wearing hi-visibility patrol uniform or visible patrolling methods.

“It’s just the way it has always been in South Armagh. [We] don’t see the value. The public don’t care, they are more interested in the job you do. Bosses think hi-vis is more important than it is. There is more to service delivery than what you wear/look like.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

“Hi-visibility clothing is only worn at an RTC when it is absolutely necessary. That’s just the way it is down here.”

- *Sergeant*

Other officers, generally in management and neighbourhood policing roles, expressed a different view, highlighting the pressures they experienced to conform to the dominant culture.

“If you turned up in a yellow coat comments would probably be made – it’s a culture, a different place. I don’t have an issue wearing a yellow coat if a direction is made to wear one routinely.”

- *Sergeant*

“It is very controversial to be in hi-vis, to go out on foot, even in Newtownhamilton. It is very RUC with full tactical patrols down the street hunkering down behind walls. Why?”

- *Constable*

“I’ve been told I must have been the first ever officer to wear a yellow coat at the border. It was an old hand and he was trying to make a fool of me. I would prefer not to die at an RTC where there are already two long arms and six side arms – how much risk am I really at?”

- *Constable*

“If someone wants to do you harm realistically it won’t make much difference if you are in hi-vis or not. It would definitely make a big statement to the community. There is an element of we’re special about the whole thing.”

- *Chief Inspector*

The Corporate Appearance and Protective Equipment Standard states, *“Dress and appearance are vitally important in increasing confidence and enhancing the professional image of the Police Service.”*⁸²

Name badges were noted not to be routinely worn by officers despite assurances to the contrary. Woollen hats were observed and acknowledged to be worn by LPT officers, in spite of local directions that this practice should desist. This is not standard patrol uniform for LPT officers; instead this item forms part of the ‘Number 3’ uniform utilised by Armed Response, Combined Operational Training staff and Tactical Support Group when engaged in search duties. The image is likely to have a negative community impact due to perceptions associated with the past and the practice is not considered to have objective justification.

Supervisors have a key role to play in the authorisation process for obtaining uniform items and are responsible for ensuring that standards of dress and appearance are in compliance with corporate standards.

There is not a single police branded vehicle in the South Armagh fleet. Specific consideration was given to introducing liveried vehicles in 2019, however, the senior management decision was not to make any change at that time. This was at odds with ongoing developments across the Service to increase liveried armoured fleet.⁸³ The decision was influenced, in part, by uncertainties associated with EU Exit but also by a local report which had been produced in relation to the issue.⁸⁴

The report is comprehensive in providing arguments against the introduction of liveried vehicles in South Armagh concluding that, *“[There is] no strong evidence to justify changes taking into consideration internal and external impacts and benefits... [P]erhaps the biggest anticipated cost would be to officer safety in the likelihood of increased injury and increased sickness levels.”*

It was argued that there are, *“better ways of informing the locals of [police activity] through other channels (social media, community groups, political representatives) rather than announcing activity and presence with liveried vehicles.”*

⁸² Corporate Appearance and Protective Equipment Standard (CAPES), June 2020

⁸³ Belfast City Policing District and H District/Derry City & Strabane, Transport Services

⁸⁴ 51/1 Internal Police Report to District Commander, 21/07/2020

The following rationale was provided:

- Impact limited in rural areas as compared with urban built up areas
- Further research required to confirm the link between visible patrolling and crime prevention
- Detection rates could be severely impacted by more overt patrolling
- Overkill and negative community impact due to multiple vehicle attendance on routine basis creating fear in community regarding serious incidents
- Impact on officer safety in relation to vehicles failing to stop and increased ramming incidents
- Discourage reporting due to concerns about overt police presence at homes
- Increase in terrorist targeting

During consultation, the District Commander was supportive of high visibility patrolling, *“All police vehicles should be liveried but we would probably encounter more damage to fleet.”*

Organisational experience does not indicate that this would necessarily be the case, in that more vehicle damage is routinely encountered to the unmarked than the liveried fleet.⁸⁵

In relation to the report, *“I may not have agreed with all of it but it made me see a different perspective.”*⁸⁶

This report perhaps serves to demonstrate the influence of the operational perspective on strategic decision making. The report’s content should arguably have served as an indicator of issues in the local policing culture, requiring developmental intervention.

Perspectives in the report were echoed by operational officers during consultation:

“We don’t have liveried vehicles in Newry yet so I think it is a bit early.”

- LPT Sergeant

“To prevent attacks, even if simply stoning.”

- LPT Constable Crossmaglen

⁸⁵ Head of Transport Services, 19/02/2020, general experience

⁸⁶ District Commander

“There is a certain element that would consider it a trophy to push you off the road. Everyone knows our vehicles anyway so we are already visible.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

“For years I would have said no way. I don’t see the issue now but I’m talking about the low key vehicles with the sign along the side not the light on the roof and hi-vis. In the back of my mind I am conscious of how it can be interpreted from a distance.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

“Maybe a liveried car once or twice a week but don’t keep it there.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

“It may eventually be possible, maybe once a month, then leave it for a month or two.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

“It would be nice to see liveried vehicles in South Armagh but would it make us a soft target?”

- *Inspector*

There was, however, support by a significant minority of officers, again predominantly those in neighbourhood policing roles:

“People would be very receptive to high visibility patrol and that is my aim...I accept that not everyone would share that view. Other Districts do it with a higher threat. Otherwise we are very unapproachable.”

- *Sergeant*

“Newry may actually suffer more in liveried – nobody stones police in South Armagh...Convoy is more visible,”

- *Constable*

“Everyone knows that unmarked vehicles are police vehicles in any case.”

- *Chief Inspector*

“We don’t have access to a liveried vehicle but have no problem using one...I think it would be encouraging for the community to see.”

- *Constable*

“We were shouted at for taking a soft skin hi-visibility vehicle out. I have driven liveried vehicles in Pomeroy, Carrickmore and Craigavon. People know police cars whether liveried or not.”

- *Constable*

“It is much better that they see us – a visible footprint. It is beneficial for us to be seen.”

- *Constable*

Records show that there was an intent to increase the use of liveried police vehicles and the visibility of patrol officers, *“by the end of June 2010...where possible commensurate with the threat”*.⁸⁷

It is considered reasonable in the context of the prevailing security threat in 2010 that this aspiration did not come to fruition. A decade later, this position no longer remains tenable in the context of an enabling community environment and a policing culture which promotes the value of visible policing.

Weapons

The presence of G36 weapons along with ancillary kite sight equipment in the Christmas 2019 social media post was the subject of particular public concern.

Long arm, G36 rifles are routinely and overtly carried by every operational police patrol in South Armagh. At Inspector level, there is a clear expectation that this policy is complied with as a necessity for ensuring officer safety.

A ‘Kite’ is a military standard night vision sight designed specifically for short to medium range surveillance and target engagement.⁸⁸ The associated sensitivities are clear.

The use of kite sights is not common across the organisation. Only 4 Police Service armouries accessed this equipment in a 12 month period.⁸⁹ Crossmaglen personnel utilised Kite Sights more than any other area in this period - on 30 occasions, compared with the other armouries which averaged 1.67 occasions.⁹⁰

⁸⁷ Email correspondence to District Commander, November 2017

⁸⁸ www.excelitas.com

⁸⁹ 01/10/17 – 30/09/18, Statistical Report to Firearms Strategic Board, May 2019

⁹⁰ Statistical Report to Firearms Strategic Board, May 2019

“We are 45 minutes away from help which is why we need to be kitted up. It influences your approach.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

The community impact was not widely recognised with limited evidence of empathy with local people and an inaccurate understanding of community perspective. The concept of reduced or covert carriage had not been considered at any level to minimise the community impact and increase the accessibility of officers to the public. Such practices are common in other areas which experience a higher terrorist-related threat.

“It’s more of a political thing that isn’t mentioned on the street. The locals are well used to us carrying rifles as a matter of course. There’s never even a thought we would go out without one. It is such a normal thing for us and it’s never cast up locally.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

“During beats of the town we would have at least one G36 although we have considered the necessity a lot more since the tweet and it has made us reflect. Locals have never made an issue about guns, it’s the norm.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

“There was a number of police in Crossmaglen that were trying to work with the community...The heavily armed thing always put an end to that.”

- *Local Representative*

“There are a lot of barriers and image is a big barrier and nobody wants to be stood talking to someone carrying a submachine gun and wearing green fatigues.”

- *Elected Representative*

“Interaction would be easier for the community if you were just seen as a police force and not as an army. In normal circumstances police have liveried cars, officers wear white shirts and are not carrying sub-machine guns and not standing on corners of streets heavily armed. Even for a relatively minor traffic offence you could have half a dozen vehicles in a very small area. That looks like a lot of officers heavily armed and it looks like a military raid. Your image is important and the perception remains that nothing has changed.”

- *Elected Representative*

“How are we supposed to get people to buy into this when it is so very reminiscent of the RUC?”

- *Elected Representative*

Community consultation would strongly suggest that heavily armed police are not approachable and serve to reinforce stereotypes of a by-gone era. It is the responsibility of police leaders to ensure that the style and tone of policing enhances the delivery of a visible, accessible, responsive and community focused service. This requires oversight and direction on the purpose, proportionality and justification for the overt carriage of long arm weapons.

“We have been questioning whether long arms are in fact a necessity. Before Christmas we didn’t leave the station without them, now there is an openness to not having to... The concern is the image it presents in a public facing role.”

- *NPT Constable*

“[We] don’t need long arms in South Armagh, especially if you consider the purpose of this type of weapon.”

- *Chief Inspector*

Tasking Protocols

Delayed attendance and responsiveness was raised as an issue of particular and consistent concern.

Tasking protocols in South Armagh do not conform to standard organisational processes, performed by Contact Management Centre (CMC). CMC staff do not directly assign resource to incidents and instead refer incidents by telephone to the South Armagh Duty Sergeant for review and direction. This results in delay in attendance and duplication of checks and verification. Incidents reviewed indicated repeat telephone contact with reporting persons to confirm and re-verify details, with a negative impact on responsiveness to identified risk in emergency incidents.

“Sergeants are not reluctant to respond but it’s fair to say it causes delay. We encourage more reporting and appeal to them to work with us. They say, ‘what’s the point when it takes you so long to come out?’.”

- *Chief Inspector*

“There is no evidence to suggest a ‘come-on’. The Sergeant tasking model slows down service provision. The complex geography of the area is an issue however this is not insurmountable with familiarisation and mapping technology.”

- Chief Inspector

“I’ve had to call them a few times and they have been out very promptly. They know I’m legit. I would only ring if I really needed help and they are there to help us.”

- Local Business Owner and Resident

“Operational response to crime in South Armagh in the past has been delayed and when it is acted upon, the response is that of a counterinsurgency orientated police force...the community in South Armagh say this is antagonistic, at best. Instead of this kind of response there should be a community safety, human rights orientated police service at its core.”

- PCSP Independent Member

“Police landing in 5 hours later or the next day is not much good to anyone.”

- Local Resident

This practice is not formally written down and instead has its origins in the Normalisation Strategy of the mid-2000’s which stipulated contact management practices as a risk mitigation factor for attendance at incidents. This incorporated deference to the experience of local officers to determine resourcing and to resolve incidents by telephone or police station attendance rather than face to face at the point of need. The influence of this on contemporary practice was reinforced by Newtownhamilton LPT officers who commented on the ease of transition to Covid-restrictions due to the amount of work that they routinely managed over the phone rather than in people’s own homes.

“It takes some time for anyone to come out, if at all. They prefer to do their dealings over the phone rather than come out. If you have been broken into it is a major thing and you want to see someone personally. In my own experience of having a break in on a Friday night I didn’t see police out until Saturday afternoon.”

- Local Business Owner and Resident

In the context of persistent under-reporting, the service-user experience must be both responsive, reassuring and empathetic. Incidents which were reviewed provided indications of concern regarding the quality of contact and explanation of process during calls for service. To achieve an outcome of increased reporting in the longer term, the initial point of contact needs to be more responsive to build end-to-end confidence in our service and demonstrate that we care, we listen and we act. This requires us to take every opportunity to engage and interact directly with those who seek our help. This may require consideration of a bespoke call resolution policy to maximise relationship building by direct engagement.

Internally there was a lack of confidence in, and respect for, CMC Dispatchers and understanding of the processes and protocols which they follow:

“People have no idea in call handling and they would also risk sending people who have no idea of the area....Important way of giving officers reassurance - call handler cannot send a car into South Armagh.”

- *District Commander*

“It really depends on who is on the control desk and whether they have enough experience of the area.”

- *Chief Inspector*

“We can often verify the call from local knowledge or by calling local contacts known to us close by.”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

Work is needed to develop more productive working relationships between CMC and South Armagh personnel. Increased information sharing and formal lines of communication may promote reassurance regarding organisational verification and tasking processes to ensure that appropriate levels of professional respect are afforded to the Contact Management function. It may also assist contact management staff to reassure callers from South Armagh at the first point of contact.

Engagement

“Policing with the community should be the core function of the police service and the core function of every police station.”⁹¹

- *Patten Recommendation 44, 1999*

The continued importance of community policing was reinforced by the Chair of the Northern Ireland Policing Board in the Foreword to the Policing Plan 2020-25, *“Good Policing requires collaboration and connection to the community.”*

The Policing Plan 2020-25 goes on to reinforce, *“There is an evidence base to support the benefits of a sustainable police presence in local communities to prevent crime and enhance community safety. This is particularly important in supporting prosperity and the longer term development of the most deprived areas of Northern Ireland. Locally recognised and visible officers are an essential building block, enabling partnership working and helping to solve public safety problems together with the community”⁹²*

Objectively considered, the local policing approach does not align to this standard.

“Detachment is still there and feeds into the community view of police – old RUC not policing with the community, but policing the community.”

- *Elected Representative*

“I understand that there has been a focus on community policing in recent years but it is hard to see that in Newtown...it is as if nobody cares about us.”

- *Community Association Representative*

“The local police are just total strangers.”

- *Local Representative*

“As an everyday person living in Crossmaglen I would have no personal relationship with the police service...we only see them coming into the barracks in armoured cars...You have community officers that people don’t know...You cannot act like police from the past, at the moment it’s a carbon copy of the past...we need to feel like they are our police service.”

- *Elected Representative*

⁹¹ A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland - The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, 1999

⁹² Policing Plan 2020-25, Page 9

During consultation it was clear that, apart from two dedicated neighbourhood Constables, local officers were not known to local people. There was a lack of established links, even with local elected representatives and a tendency to underestimate the value of their role in representing local people and facilitating communication. Local councillors often did not have a named police contact or direct means of contacting their local officers other than via the 101 non-emergency line. No efforts had been made to proactively engage with a new Sinn Fein councillor for Crossmaglen who had taken up office during the Review. There was also no established contact with the SDLP representative for the area despite his clear interest and advocacy role in policing related issues.

Feedback was also received that a lack of continuity at supervisory and senior management levels has had a detrimental impact on building productive and trusting working relationships.

“Meeting once a month with a few reps isn’t my idea of partnership. There has been progress but it is simply not enough...Unless there is a specific issue [engagement] is limited...This could be done much better and there is room for improvement.”

- Elected Representative

“Police can’t just stand from afar and respond to 101. Need to create genuine opportunities for engagement, not box ticking. It has to be better than that.”

- Community Restorative Justice Representatives

“Grass roots level engagement is important.”

- Elected Representative

“It is a good idea to link in with others who are working on the ground and work in partnership.”

- DEA Coordinator

“It would be helpful if I, as a local councillor, could get general details to provide to constituents. We could relay that back.”

- Elected Representative

“Nothing is ever done about information given by local reps and there are no updates... [It would be] so great to lift the phone and have a positive outcome, to liaise with police and make it work.”

- Elected Representative

An academic review of visible policing conducted in Police Scotland highlights the importance of regular community engagement, with ongoing communication being important for building trust and confidence with communities.

“Being familiar, approachable, helpful, empathetic, and listening and understanding the needs of the community are related to trust and confidence.”⁹³

Local police, however, felt that they had a developed network of community contacts and an appropriate engagement focus. The extent of the lack of contact was minimised with implication that there was a reluctance on the part of the community to engage in policing. This perspective is clearly at odds with the aspirations of the community. There is clear evidence of a community who understand what good policing should look like but feel underwhelmed by what they are experiencing.

Issues with the 101 non-emergency reporting line emerged as a theme during consultation, aligned to the findings of the Local Policing Consultation 2018. This was supported by LPT and NPT officers as an identified community concern and barrier to engagement. Direct contact was preferred and advocated for by both local officers and local representatives.

“There is still reluctance for people to pass information or report directly to yourselves. It may be connected to the formality of that initial phone call, especially when you are asked for your date of birth. Something needs to be done with call handlers as ideally I don’t want to be that middle person.”

- Elected Representative

“There is too much red tape around contacting PSNI through [101]. It might take 5 minutes to explain my name and confirm the spelling and location of the address...very basic local things. By the time the information gets through and police are dispatched, it may be 25 minutes say but it’s too late by that stage. When it goes direct it works well.”

- Elected Representative

⁹³ *Review of Evidence: What effect do enforcement-orientated and engagement-orientated methods of visible policing have on public confidence? Scottish Institute for Policing Research, July 2018*

“Used to have better working relationship where we could phone through to Cross PSNI Station and I worked with the local police on a number of issues. Then they put us through the 101 number which would have you waiting on the line for 15-20 minutes. On one occasion the phone dropped out and in an emergency situation you would have to go for the community solution, to deal with things ourselves...it has taken out any personal relationship.”

- Local Representative

“I used to call 101 but only ended up being transferred to mobiles that went straight to answer phone.”

- Local Business Owner and Resident

“For an incident we would call 101 or 999, although the 101 is frustrating as it takes some time to get through and if you go through switchboard to speak to anyone in Crossmaglen station you often don’t get through.”

- Local Business Owner and Resident

“The issues of years and years back which stopped people calling the police are not there now. I have seen a dramatic change in this in even the last five years. We continue to urge people to contact the police. My attitude is, if you keep bothering them they will get fed up and have to do something.”

- Community Association Representative

There is a balance to be struck between use of the 101 non-emergency reporting system by members of the public and local communication networks with community partners. Frustrations are likely to be alleviated significantly if local representatives had direct contact options for known local officers. It is also hoped that in the course of time, associated changes recommended by this Review will serve to increase trust and confidence in direct police reporting.

There is significant potential for police to enhance existing community networks to ensure that they are representative of the wider community. Governance processes should be improved with regular formal stakeholder analysis and review to ensure continued growth and development.

“Policing is about people, working with and helping people. You will never get the buy in without getting to know people and the area. That takes a while as trust has to be the basis for relationships.”

- *Community Restorative Justice Representatives*

“Community groups have a responsibility too, to be seen to work with police. This shows people that it is acceptable and normal. We know the people who are vulnerable. I am very happy to work with police...”

- *Community Worker*

“We are more than happy to work with you if it helps. We could connect with you as a means of engaging through our networks.”

- *Voluntary Sector Manager – Family Support*

“What would help me would be to get a handle on who are the key police contacts –who is who and how are you structured.”

- *Senior Youth Worker*

Engagement opportunities in South Armagh need to be sensitive to the local history and context.

“How police officers engage with the public has a direct correlation with, if and how the public cooperate with the Police.”⁹⁴

- *Posick and Hatfield 2016*

Methods should be designed and delivered in partnership with community representatives so that they are carefully thought out and coordinated.

“You need to look at the way to do things and think outside the box.”

- *DEA Coordinator*

The ongoing engagement focus may not always promote desired outcomes. The current approach to Vehicle Check Points (VCP's) and Neighbourhood Watch are relevant examples:

“VCP's are an engagement opportunity where we can chat to people. At the same time I compare the amount of times people in South Armagh are stopped on the roads compared to me – they are policed in a different way.”

- *LPT Sergeant*

“We do 100s of checkpoints every year and that's not right. The police's answer to everything is a VCP. Is it really an engagement tool?”

- *LPT Constable Crossmaglen*

⁹⁴ *Review of Evidence: What effect do enforcement-orientated and engagement-orientated methods of visible policing have on public confidence? Scottish Institute for Policing Research, July 2018:14*

“VCPs can appear quite aggressive.”

- *Sergeant*

“If I ever get stopped at a checkpoint, which is rare, I never give any hassle and then I don’t get any hassle. They know me and we can have the craic.”

- *Local Business Owner and Resident*

“If I drive into a checkpoint my heart is in my mouth. I don’t see it as a friendly service.”

- *Local Resident*

The use of Vehicle Check Points must be carefully managed and aligned to local policing objectives with revised terminology, style and focus appropriate to the local operating context. *“In order to encourage citizens to engage with the police at a local level, officers should be encouraged to, and rewarded for, adopting methods which prioritise face to face interactions conducted with empathy and fairness. More enforcement orientated methods (such as stop and search and patrol in vehicles) are to be used as a last resort.”*⁹⁵

“Some towns don’t engage. We are trying to push Neighbourhood Watch.”

- *Inspector*

The drive towards implementing Neighbourhood Watch should be balanced alongside existing community safety infrastructure which has developed cohesively in communities in the absence of policing. Police should aspire to engage positively and respectfully within this infrastructure with a view to adding value and developing confidence. This is an opportunity for innovation and co-design to deliver solutions that meet both the regulatory requirements of policing and complement existing community structures. We should not be afraid to recognise that police do not have all the answers. We all have a role in making our community safer.

“Feedback was that even the very term ‘Neighbourhood Watch’ was off-putting for some communities...I know there are other groups operating outside of the PCSP remit. If they are operating for the benefit of local areas and responsibly...then no real concern.”

- *PCSP Manager*

“We don’t want Neighbourhood Watch in South Armagh...the name is important and Community Alert is much better...they just don’t serve the correct purpose.”

- *Community Restorative Justice Representatives*

⁹⁵ *Review of Evidence: What effect do enforcement-orientated and engagement-orientated methods of visible policing have on public confidence? Scottish Institute for Policing Research, July 2018:17*

“Sense of local community [in South Armagh] is a real strength.... If you are engaged with businesses, schools, community associations and football clubs that is powerful representation – you should play to the strength of those community links.”

- Elected Representative

There is also room for improvement in the regularity, meaningfulness and processes for community impact assessment. No centralised record is currently maintained and no one consistent approach to completion was apparent. A manual trawl of local records indicated that a total of 57 community impact assessments had been completed in the 2019/20 financial year. Records and feedback from local representatives highlighted clear potential to increase communication, both in advance of and after operations. This would provide opportunities to mitigate community impact and proactively manage the consequences of police intervention.⁹⁶

“Police need to take their lead from [partners] and be mindful that what works in one area won’t always work in another.”

- Youth Worker

The development of trusting relationships is key to this and requires dedicated focus to redress the current imbalance.

“If strangers police strangers then mistrust quickly fills the vacuum. So policing needs not just to respond to emergencies and investigate crimes, but also to actively engage communities, getting to know people and helping to solve their problems. If the only time you see police in your neighbourhood is when they turn up in numbers to make an arrest, then all you see is a police force not a police service. It is a crucial distinction.”⁹⁷

“Young people are...fearful and anxious about any contact with PSNI...They are not really sure about police powers and have heard stories from the past and have a fear of bringing police unnecessarily into their community...People don’t know their local police here.”

- Youth Worker

“It comes down to the style and quality of interaction...important to have interaction with police every day rather than when there is trouble or something has gone wrong. This can have a big impact on how police are received, particularly in South Armagh...Small interactions make all the difference and who you have doing it.”

- DEA Coordinator

⁹⁶ A notable example of this during the Review related to communication regarding planned radio telecommunications infrastructure, Forkhill and Crossmaglen areas

⁹⁷ *Out of the darkness: policing and the death of George Floyd – The Police Foundation, 05/06/2020*

“No, [you don’t see police] really at all. You may see a checkpoint on a back country road and then it will just be a red light in the distance. I would know if I seen them in the area that something was wrong...I’ve worked here for 10 years and I only know [the two main Neighbourhood Constables] and that is just from attending meetings not from in the community. All the contact and work seems to be ad-hoc and without a plan.”

- *Community Worker*

Internally, there is a need to increase the value and professional respect that is attached to the neighbourhood policing role.

“The current attitude is, we go to calls, and you do the fluffy stuff.”

- *NPT Sergeant*

“NPT need to get away from pink fluffy things and focus on what matters to community.”

- *District Commander*

“NPT have a certain reputation that they don’t do anything and drink tea all day.”

- *NPT Constable*

“They need to balance the ops we are used for with engagement.”

- *NPT Constable*

“We do need time and resources to do engagement properly.”

- *NPT Constable*

“We spend most of our time supporting HMRC ops or conducting VCPs for cross border ops.”

- *NPT Constable*

One Constable working in Newtownhamilton LPT reported that, “we don’t do engagement”. This was disputed by officers from the same team during a separate consultation, “Engagement is definitely part of our role.”

“A lot of officers don’t recognise what they are doing is engagement. The organisation hasn’t done very well to develop the concept. It should not be pink and fluffy in any way.”

- *District Commander*

“A lot of officers don’t want to do engagement and youth work or are not interested in building relationships. They are not really ideal attitudes to have in policing but particularly here.”

- NPT Constable

“Getting LPT to think and act like NPT is the issue – need the right people. A lot of calls are low level NPT type calls anyway.”

- NPT Constable

“It’s a challenge operating in a vacuum. It’s not what I expected or am used to. Our ideas on what is appropriate and theirs differs.”

- NPT Constable

Encouragingly, the value of neighbourhood policing was widely recognised by local community representatives.

“There is a lot of appetite for engagement.”

- Elected Representative

“I don’t understand your structure or ranks...Most people in South Armagh don’t recognise the rank... You have the soldiers, then the

Sergeant, then Chief Inspector. There is a whole different wing of the police that are community police. Those are the ones that the people like. The others I’m not sure what they do...Until now you have dealt with South Armagh in a particular way – if we can get past that people in South Armagh can benefit. We wouldn’t see policing as a heavily fortified thing that comes into your area, says they are going to arrest, don’t and then disappear and go home again. The style of policing from Stevie and Mark is what we need.”⁹⁸

- Elected Representative

“The community is desperate for police to be there and support them.”

- Elected Representative

“Policing is supposed to be community based. If we have a problem police are not there, that’s the first problem.

- Local Resident

“People will say, you can’t get police – what’s the point in even trying. By the time they get here, people are long gone and nothing will be done. They drive through, they don’t stop or even slow down. They don’t even look. They don’t bother and it’s no good...”

- Community Association Representative

⁹⁸ Referring to the two dedicated NPT Constables working in the area

“[In PCSP] I was very jealous of the other areas. They had community policing that we didn’t have. We still have political policing not community policing. Police in heavy numbers and heavily armed. We have yet to see community policing in the area. That is why we have a different perspective – you would go to other places and see them walking around and involved in community stuff while we never got to that because we got the blunter end of policing in this area.”

- Local Representative

“[They should be] visible and engaging with the community. Stopping and having a chat...should look after interests and welfare and look to engage as the main focus.”

- Elected Representative

“People want to see presence and for police to be there dealing with the issues. The more they see police the more likely such activity will be prevented. A lot of the areas would say they would like to see more police presence to prevent anti-social behaviour and drugs use. Others say they want to see more diversionary preventative early intervention programmes.”

- DEA Coordinator

“Engage in community events but also engage in just walking about and talking. If you don’t do it others fill the void and police instead....We need more inclusive structures.”

- Elected Representative

“Friendship building like calling to houses, knocking on doors and checking in on local people.”

- Community Worker

“Community engagement and dealing with everybody equally should be the most important focus. We all want the same thing – a good service which we can rely on regardless of who I am and where I live. For me that is the bottom line. If we can get this right then the rest will follow.”

- Elected Representative

This need was also recognised by officers working in neighbourhood roles:

“Local people do want engagement on the ground but they want interaction and engagement...They are really crying out for a more inclusive approach.”

- Chief Inspector

“We are working to push parameters. The community is ready for it, anything that we do.”

- NPT Constable

“People in South Armagh are thought to be stand offish but I haven’t experienced that.”

- NPT Constable

“There needs to be a recognition that there is a lot more we can do for the public.”

- NPT Constable

Neighbourhood policing needs to be placed at the front and centre of policing delivery in South Armagh. This recommended shift is in line with current organisational strategy – *“We will evolve neighbourhood policing so that the public can see it and feel its direct contact.”*⁹⁹

In order to create a positive identity around neighbourhood policing, time, space and resources need to be invested alongside dedicated and progressive leadership. *“There is evidence to suggest that without organisational buy-in and management support for community policing [as opposed to enforcement activity] it is more difficult for community police officers to see the value in their role. They may become frustrated and look towards roles that are ‘real’ police work.”*¹⁰⁰

Abstraction from neighbourhood roles should only be considered as a matter of last resort. Neighbourhood policing issues should be discussed in daily management meetings and the activity of NPT highlighted to demonstrate their positive contribution and impact on local policing. *“Neighbourhood policing is a core priority and the system needs to support neighbourhood not the other way around.”*¹⁰¹

A Performance Monitoring Framework is required that values visibility and engagement in its own right and considers quantitative and qualitative indicators of success.

In the post-review context, a neighbourhood policing role in South Armagh offers significant professional development opportunities for interested officers and it should be promoted accordingly across the wider organisation. It is anticipated that developments in the neighbourhood policing model in South Armagh over the next number of years will generate organisational learning. Links to relevant corporate policy and cultural workstreams should be established to create alignment and to ensure that learning is captured and embedded.

⁹⁹ Prevention First – Crime Prevention Strategy 2025

¹⁰⁰ Review of Evidence: What effect do enforcement-orientated and engagement-orientated methods of visible policing have on public confidence? Scottish Institute for Policing Research, July 2018:2

¹⁰¹ Influenced by perspectives from academic critical friend, Ulster University, August 2020

There were indications that the majority of officers did not fully appreciate that police structures themselves, rather than the local community, that may have inadvertently created barriers to progress. There was limited recognition of local efforts to embrace policing, creating the impetus for police to step forward and lead change.

“In some ways the community are ahead of the police...They accept the need for policing but not in the type it is at the moment. It is not genuinely responsive to community needs.”

- Community Restorative Justice Representatives

“We do have an issue getting served in shops in Crossmaglen. If you want a normalised policing service why are we not received normally...You need to make the first move. How can we build on that if they are not willing to meet us halfway?”

- Inspector

“I have never really seen a police officer in Crossmaglen. It would be discrimination not to serve them was my first reaction and then I re-evaluated myself. In actual fact we are being discriminated against. We do not have a policing system that we can rely on.”

- Elected Representative

“We want Crossmaglen to be a place to visit and live and we want police to be part of that but it takes time. I don’t think we are that far away from police being able to get their teas and coffees in the town. It goes back to them being present and taking it step by step.”

- Local Business Owner and Resident

“We don’t set the pace for change, they do – it is very customer orientated in that regard. For some it’s too fast, for others too slow... There is always more we can do. We do maybe need to put them under pressure to move things on.”

- Sergeant LPT

“People want normality in the town although the issue is that they are still not normal with us, although they want normal policing.”

- Sergeant LPT

“We have to take it at a pace they can accept.”

- Constable Crossmaglen LPT

“The society is not normal either; we have to take them with us.”

- Constable Crossmaglen LPT

“I think intrinsically there is a distrust...towards PSNI and a lot of locals are stuck in the past.”

- *Constable Crossmaglen LPT*

“I can understand why people feel bitter as we did get it wrong at times and we do have a lot of changes to make...The community has moved a fair bit, they’ll move if we move.”

- *Sergeant LPT*

The above comments are in stark contrast to those expressed by local community representatives.

“People have moved on from this thing about involving police. Police are seen as part of the community now and people want them involved. Police are quite acceptable to people in Newtownhamilton.”

- *Community Worker*

“We will play our part in doing policing differently in South Armagh.”

- *Community Restorative Justice Representatives*

“All too long we’ve been given the excuse, there’s nothing we can do...I’m here too long listening to the same excuse. It’s not up to the community to make those changes, it’s up to the police to make that change. The most important thing is mutual respect trust and that has to be earned. That can’t be done when they are not visible in the community in a positive way...They should be making themselves a part of the community...We will do the work with you to ensure we get a proper policing system here...A bit of give and take required and some positive steps by police...I am ready for policing. I want my children and constituents to have safety. It would be a lot better if we felt we had the support of PSNI – we could help each other out.”

- *Elected Representative*

“This is a public service which we all pay for through our taxes. We should therefore expect to get a proper service.”

- *Elected Representative*

Stations

There has been long term underinvestment in stations at Newtownhamilton and Crossmaglen. The interior facilities are in a poor state of repair and the external appearance is run down and overbearing. There is an absence of current organisational branding and messaging, inside and out.

“One issue that is raised by all sections of the community is the aesthetic of stations.”

- *Elected Representative*

Newtownhamilton station dominates the town, causing long running frustration due to the impact that security bollards have on the two way movement of traffic and potential parking facilities in the Square. Crossmaglen station occupies a prime position in the centre of the town and is considered to be the most securely fortified station in the PSNI estate. Public access is subject to physical security precautions that are neither welcoming nor accessible to local people. The stations fail to represent a modern and progressive police service and have negative impacts on their local environment, community relations and officer mind-set.

“The building itself is like a drab fortress which is unwelcoming. The very letters are missing from the PSNI sign and the noticeboard is so deteriorated it couldn’t be used... There is a big parking issue and it would be a major boost to have parking opposite. The one way system is also an issue. We need the room around the police station to resolve this.”

- *Community Association Representative on Newtownhamilton Police Station*

“The look of the station would be talked about, particularly the area of waste ground with the bollards as the town is in real need of extra parking and the space would be great particularly when the community centre is running events. I would also be very keen to see two way traffic on Newry Street.”

- *Community Worker on Newtownhamilton Police Station*

“Fortresses in Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton are not what you would expect a civil, community based police force to operate out of. This is especially true of Crossmaglen – it’s horrendous... the buildings are uninviting and there is no interaction between the community and the buildings themselves. Therefore there is no attachment or feeling that they are there to serve the community or the public.”

- *Elected Representative*

“It’s like walking back in time when you walk into the place.”

- *Chief Inspector on Crossmaglen Police Station*

“Militaristic and draconian bunker ...I don’t think the station has changed much since Op BANNER.”

- *LPT Constable on Crossmaglen Police Station*

“Both stations detract massively from the town in terms of looks. Upgrading the façade of Crossmaglen with school art work won’t do it!”

- *LPT Sergeant*

“It comes up at every single meeting I have been to. Everybody looks on them as an eyesore and they are concerned about the impact on the travel and tourism industry.”

- *Inspector*

“Police stations should be places of sanctuary. Where do you go if you need help?”

- *Superintendent*

Photographs of South Armagh Police Stations are attached at Appendix G.

Recommendation 53 of the Independent Commission on Policing stipulated in 1999 that, “Existing police stations should – subject to the security situation in their areas and to health and safety considerations – be progressively made less forbidding in appearance, more accessible to public callers and more congenial for those working in them. The public reception areas inside police stations should be made more welcoming, and civilian receptionists should replace police officers.”¹⁰²

¹⁰² A New Beginning: Policing in Northern Ireland - The Report of the Independent Commission on Policing for Northern Ireland, 1999

Whilst it is accepted that the security situation in South Armagh, for a time, precluded the re-development of stations in line with this recommendation, this no longer continues to be the case.

“The PSNI still operates out of very heavily fortified barracks in Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton. They are still heavily armed and the general perception is that, as an organisation, they have not moved on which also indicates that the area, known as South Armagh has not moved on either.”

- PCSP Independent Member

“In 2020, a police station should not resemble a barracks. That must change.”

- Elected Representative

“When you have guys driving into the station, a former British army barracks, it is very difficult to see them any differently. It is a major problem. Locally it is seen as a political decision to keep the station, almost like an out-post of the Empire.”

- Elected Representative on Crossmaglen Police Station

“When you look from the sky, the sheer size and scale of the militarised fort is a problem. I can see why it was built...can we not review that now? I’m not saying we don’t want a police station – people have grown up in a garrison town but for the regeneration of the town it needs to change to allow people to feel better about themselves and get rid of the chains of the past.”

- Elected Representative on Newtownhamilton Police Station

“The Giro D’Italia went through [Newtownhamilton] and I was embarrassed. It’s as if we need policed and controlled more than anywhere else. That may have been the case in the past but not now.”

- Elected Representative

“It is a community priority to reduce the station to a manageable size which allows you to feel safe and be practical to do operational work out of it...No one person in the community would believe the police need a compound of that size...Nobody knows how many is in it, but it’s clear it’s not packed. It needs to be narrowed down to make the town functional. There was a loss of land on both sides and from history this was vested land taken off local families. I would like it to be used as a car park and community garden or new shop...”

You want to win hearts and minds of people? That's how you will do it."

- Elected Representative on Newtownhamilton Police Station

"It's not about having a station, it's about having a normal and approachable station. But it is not acceptable or welcome in the format it is in at the minute. The militaristic style, weaponry and fortified bases are definitely not doing anything for community engagement in policing."

- Elected Representative

"It doesn't just dominate the town, it suffocates it and again is a remnant of a militaristic style. It needs to become just another government building which is open to the public and accessible. "

- Elected Representative on Newtownhamilton Police Station

"Station is an imposing structure with fortified walls ... we are looking for a more connected and open service. It would go a long way...We are two decades past the need for that. We need a normal station, we need to move on. We should have connection to the police service otherwise it is not a service for us. Open it up to the people!"

- Elected Representative

In February 2017, a review of policing delivery in Slieve Gullion DEA sought to balance the demand for policing against the assessed threat, risk and harm, to provide best value for money whilst seeking to improve quality of local policing service delivery. This resulted in a decision to retain both operating bases in Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton with a view in the medium to longer term of disposing with the station complex in Crossmaglen. No further audit or records of decision making has been found in relation to this review.¹⁰³

Demand does not support the need for two stations in South Armagh. Whilst Crossmaglen arguably does provide a better location owing to the size of the local resident population, geographical location within the DEA and distance from Newry, it also presents particular challenges which make its future untenable. There are limitations to the site's capacity and its accessibility. The legacy of the station has an unhelpful impact internally on the mind-set of officers and externally on the associations of the local community. Despite the community advocating demands for modern, progressive and present policing only one respondent was in favour of the retention of a station in Crossmaglen.

¹⁰³ Email correspondence by the then District Commander

“Crossmaglen would provoke the most reaction when physical buildings are discussed. It is symbolic of a time in the past and it is so close to the football ground.”

- Elected Representative

“It’s a big thing for someone to come to Crossmaglen station... they’re reluctant to be seen.”

- LPT Constable Crossmaglen

“Backward facing, like a military memorial. We have to get away from the RUC past – the community has moved. Crossmaglen closure would be a positive.”

- Management Team

“It is a comfort blanket. For what we are paying against productivity and community impact it is not adding value. In general the community would support closure. You have to ask yourself, what is it really there for? It doesn’t really sell who we are today.”

- Management Team

“It’s there for political reasons. I cannot understand why it’s there anymore when you look at the output by officers compared

with probationers in Newry. They put them to shame. Absolutely something needs to be done...at the moment it is shocking and it’s a terrible advert for policing. It says to the public we’re hiding behind the station walls away from you and the message is stay away we want nothing to do with the local community.”

- Sergeant LPT

“Local people want to see a local station. Station, however, should be more like a normal reporting station with public access. Not seen locally as a police station in the normal sense.”

- Sergeant

“It is not a place I would ever go or would want to go into...We want the barracks gone. It is an eyesore and the worst thing to have to look at. My children won’t even walk on the same side as it - it is scary to them. It is not an inviting place to be. It would be better to have access to a room hired out in the community centre or elsewhere in the town...A lot of money has obviously been spent on it recently and this raises questions in itself.”

- Elected Representative on Crossmaglen

“There is no one who would say it isn’t a scary, dreary place. People rather go to Newry. When you stand outside and ring that door and that door of steel eventually opens and you go into that dark corridor and are faced with another steel door. You feel like you are never going to get out of there. 20 years ago police talked about shop front policing. 20 years later we are still going through steel doors into a dirty stone corridor. It has an awful smell. And that’s the image of policing that we have, that’s the experience...It is the most frightening experience you can imagine. It’s definitely part of the reason people won’t go.”

- Local Representative

“The entrance from outside to the enquiry office is similar to the Crumlin Road Jail tunnel.”

- LPT Constable Crossmaglen

“Police stations are difficult by nature because of the way they have been militarised with a ring of steel. Foreboding places, quite intimidating places. I can’t see there is any massive threat. There is a need to make policing very much part of everyday life....the level of

steel barriers needs to be trimmed back. Not asking for it all at once but do need to be slightly less domineering and repressive places of the community. That would go a long way. The police stations are right slap bang in the middle of the villages, dominating the whole community...Newtownhamilton and Crossmaglen are not terribly far away from one another. As long as it was played very carefully in terms of how the cover would look then no issue with a reduction to one station in principle.”

- Elected Representative

“Crossmaglen station is the biggest eyesore we have....The PSNI Station is a blight on the town and it portrays that awful image of the town. We would love to see it gone. No issue with the police being based in Newtown or Bessbrook and the police having a shop a couple of days a week to allow us to do our business with them...People believe that PSNI is always trying to portray a bad image of the area. That was the image going around the world, this is an awful place, don’t come near....We want proper policing and we want the same policing as everywhere else and we want the area respected the same as everywhere else.”

- Local Representative

Whilst all police consultees acknowledged Crossmaglen station as an 'eyesore' and a number commented that they wouldn't want a station of that type in their own towns, the predominant view was that the station added value to the local community.

"It provides reassurance and a point of contact - people do visit the station... Any closure of Crossmaglen would be political and a station that we would not want to lose. Senior leaders have reflected this view and have been reluctant to lose the station before now. As a Commander I think we need to be there, in the place where people's voices aren't heard."

- District Commander

"People do use the station...I would definitely keep Crossmaglen. We and the people need it."

- Inspector

"It's fraught with danger because of the geography and the border. We would do ourselves a disservice if we closed both stations."

- LPT Constable Newtownhamilton

These perspectives seemed to be influenced by the premise that a station building equated with a policing presence. This fails to take

into account the mobile nature of frontline technology which is intended to facilitate systems access and update on the move, reducing the past significance of physical station infrastructure. Locate analysis indicated patterns of patrolling to and from police stations and consultation discussions confirmed this practice.

"There is a culture of going to a call and coming back in...They feel vulnerable on their feet."

- Management Team

"They tend to gravitate back to the station."

- Sergeant

"Station presence is important to facilitate engagement with community."

- District Commander

"If you interviewed people on the street today they would ask whether there was even anybody in the station. They think it is not fully manned and therefore would question why it should be there. But we need a police service and if you take it away will we have that at all?"

- Local Business Owner and Resident

“The station is definitely needed. If you need police you will get them quickly. Newtown is at least 15 minutes away and that’s too far. I would be happy to visit and call up to the station to report something. I wouldn’t want to see it taken away.”

- Local Business Owner and Resident

“[They] would not want to lose us. They realise the response time from Newry is massive. They are happy with the police and the protection the station provides. They are not swamped and getting stopped every day.”

- NPT Constable

“They want police but not the station the way it looks. But they do want police in a building.”

- Inspector

“The Community may in fact want us there as we are there to keep things in check...without a station and familiarity there is a concern that officers will not be present and be reluctant to be there.”

- District Commander

Community feedback, however, was not found to support this and strongly indicated that the station was a barrier, detrimental to community police engagement.

“The community tell us they would love it if the station was closed. There is no value added and historically a lot of negativity. We don’t need that visual style of building and it can become a target for young people.”

- Community Restorative Justice Representatives on Crossmaglen

“I don’t believe you would [be losing anything if the station closed]. Nobody is looking in and believing that if they had a problem or needed help they would call in. It doesn’t give out that feeling. It’s not doing anything for policing really. I understand that you need a presence and I understand in a way where police are coming from about protecting themselves but we need to get to a position where we have friendlier policing. That isn’t a reflection of the police on the ground, it’s a reflection of how they are attired.”

- Local Resident, Crossmaglen

“We have views that are stuck in our heads that can never be changed about the barracks, because of things that we have experienced. People would see it as a new beginning and they would celebrate that. But don’t take it away and have no access to policing. People don’t want PSNI out and law and order handed over to others. Presence doesn’t mean there has to be a structure. Removal of infrastructure would not be a ‘we won’ narrative... I would rather see you there on foot everyday but have no station.”

- Elected Representative

“What’s the purpose of the station? How many stations do you need? It’s a question of how to best use the resources that you have. I don’t think you would be losing [presence]. More presence in vehicles and patrolling would be preferred...It would be a big step in the right direction.”

- Elected Representative

“The barracks is not used and I could tell you on two hands the number of people I have ever seen going in there...there is no-one in it. I can guarantee you they are not there, not present.”

- Elected Representative

“Would it not be great to have police out on the ground in their cars – someone rings in 999/101 and they can be paged like the ambulance service.”

- Elected Representative

“Everybody wants policing but policing should be out in cars or working from a nice police station. That would make such a difference to community policing. The longer the base stays the longer this will go on. Until we have a normal station to go to you won’t have normal policing service.”

- Elected Representative

“People feel more comfortable in their own area. It’s about how to get police to feel comfortable to go there...Have a plan to have pre-arranged clinics in locations within villages...there is a need to move around. Really any small group attendance by police is a clinic... If there is a spate of burglary or anti-social behaviour in an area, go there.”

- Community Restorative Justice Representatives

“The station may not make it any easier to police the area...They do need to be softened but are needed to make inroads on the border. It will look like you are pulling back if you close a station... [You] need to maintain a presence in the area of Crossmaglen.”

- Elected Representative

“I think there is definitely a need for both and that there would be a very negative reaction to removing Crossmaglen...it would be seen as a political move....”

- Elected Representative

Concerningly, the accessibility of Crossmaglen Police Station was also found to be an issue for some police officers as well as to the community.

“We spend a lot of time here and we do view ourselves as part of the community. This is our normal and it’s like a second home. We’re happy enough.”

- LPT Constable Crossmaglen

“We’re not welcome in their home; they don’t want people coming there. There are no female toilets.”

- Constable on Crossmaglen Station

“I feel very uncomfortable there, it’s not welcoming.”

- Constable on Crossmaglen Station

Whilst there was some difference in opinion across the political spectrum, the issue of stations was an issue of critical importance to those consulted.

“Discussions need to start about the barracks – that will open people up to policing. It would be a huge statement for the community and would definitely be something that we could promote as a promising step. We could use that type of change to show that this is working, they are now listening to us. It would be the biggest physical aspect and that is how you change people’s mind-sets.”

- Elected Representative

“At a public meeting the feedback was, ‘what is the use of the barracks? Even if you knock the door they won’t answer’. It’s so, so negative when we are encouraging people to call the police. The community think, ‘what is the point?’ which is why they come to CRJ or their Councillors.”

- Community Restorative Justice Representatives

“If it closed what does that say to the community about the reason for closure and the overall impact on policing as a result? It must be ensured that a station closure doesn’t compromise current levels of service...If service could be maintained, the closure of Crossmaglen is likely to be seen as a hugely positive and welcome step.”

- PCSP Manager

Evidence indicates that Crossmaglen Police Station does not provide a positive or effective policing presence and that service and visibility can be enhanced across Slieve Gullion without this physical infrastructure. Based on the above factors it is strongly recommended that options are explored to facilitate the closure of Crossmaglen Police Station as a matter of priority. Community cooperation will be required to deliver this objective by ensuring that the emergency service radio communications network, which relies on the current police station infrastructure, can be maintained and secured using alternative facilities. Progress towards police being accommodated in community based facilities and business premises will also be a relevant enabling factor.

A new build ‘out-of-town’ site would provide the best basis for renewed police-community engagement and partnership working. This would signal a break from the past and progressive intent with a purpose built police station, which is accessible to the public and partners. The most appropriate location for such a site should be aligned to future development plans and anticipated population and associated infrastructure changes in the area. It is, however, acknowledged that this is unlikely to be achievable in the current financial climate.

As an alternative, the redevelopment of the Newtownhamilton station complex is proposed to include aesthetic replacement of external perimeter security fencing and upgrade of internal facilities to ensure a positive working environment and productive community access across South Armagh. It is essential that changes are sympathetic to the local environment by facilitating the return of parking and/or the two-way flow of traffic on the Square.

Additionally, audits of the workplace environment should be undertaken to ensure that buildings reflect the current vision and values of the Police Service. Internal imagery should include up to date corporate branding and imagery that reflects the role of modern

community focused policing within the locality of South Armagh.

A review of internal notice board facilities should also be considered in line with work undertaken at the Police College to replace them with electronic messaging facilities that keep messaging up to date and relevant. This should include a review of branding, imagery and message facilities on the exterior of the Police Estate.

The Review spent some considerable time reflecting on the influence of the workplace environment on workplace culture as evidenced in responses throughout the consultation. The leading academic authority on organisational culture, Edgar Schein, defines organisational culture as, *“the basic tacit assumptions about how the world is and ought to be that a group of people share and that determines their perceptions, thoughts, feelings and their overt behaviour... taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think and feel...”*¹⁰⁴ Schein indicates that culture is visible through artefacts within our environment and evident through group beliefs, values and underlying assumptions. Significantly he also identifies that not only are artefacts an articulation of culture but they are also mechanisms that reinforce it. Artefacts include design of physical

spaces, buildings and facades as well as stories that we tell about people and important events.

The current station infrastructure in South Armagh brings the danger and brutality of the past into the mind-set of the present. In this regard, the question arises about whether the stations and their internal artefacts are not just a barrier to the community but also for the police who work within them.

The Service Modernisation Plan, Horizon 2025, identifies representativeness and the value of diversity and inclusion as core business principles.¹⁰⁵ The PSNI People Strategy has at its core the principle of *‘being representative and inclusive’* aligned to the creation of a professional and inclusive working environment. Police station development provides an appropriate opportunity to re-evaluate the inclusiveness of our workspaces.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, until now the Police Service has not succeeded in attracting local talent to a career in policing. Insights into longer term issues regarding police recruitment were raised during consultation:

“The RUC didn’t come from the locality and that is still the case today. If you go to Louth, local Guards are local people.”

- Elected Representative

“Nobody I went to school with would want to join the police force. It wouldn’t even enter their heads. A [child] in nursery with my child once said he wanted to be a police officer on a picture. It was changed and taken down.”

- Elected Representative

“You will only get police officers where you live when people view police as a viable career opportunity at school and beyond. I know how the people of South Armagh view police. It is a long time since Sinn Fein supported police. It was a hard sell for us. It is now a long time past that and it is still a hard sell.”

- Elected Representative

“Why wouldn’t somebody want to serve as a police officer in their own community in the same way a fireman, doctor, teacher, paramedic etc.? It is the paramilitary force that is off putting for people and even to join aligned professions such as forensics...The argument against it is how can our children join a force that still reflects the history of the type of police that was here for 30-40 years? It’s a sticking point.”

- Elected Representative

“Young people from the area are not inclined to choose policing as a career path while this perception prevails. Until the Police Service are recruiting from these communities, they will not effectively police them.”

- PCSP Independent Member

“Traditionally people from South Armagh didn’t work in the police because of concerns about family targeting. It is easy enough now for a protestant man but there would always be some doubt about your family.”

- Local Public Service Provider

“My son wants to be a policeman. He knows all about the history but still wants to do it. I would hope that in 10 years’ time it will be possible for him to join the police and live in Cross but if it is not I will support him and I will leave.”

- Local Resident

“The ideal situation is to get to the stage where young people see it as their service and see it as a career path. Some things are beyond our control but it is important we continue to work and do as much as we possibly can.”

- Elected Representative

The ability to attract and sustain local recruitment is a key long term objective, serving as a signal of an embedded policing service which is recognised as making a positive contribution to preventing and reducing harm in the community.

“... [If] a police service looks more like the community it serves, it is likelier to be able to sustain public support.”¹⁰⁶

Horizon 2025 also commits to the following, *“We are almost 20 years beyond Patten and we continue to review and evaluate our tone, style and method of how we deliver our services.”¹⁰⁷*

“The tragedies of the past have left a deep and profoundly regrettable legacy of suffering. We must never forget those who have died or been injured, and their families. But we can best honour them through a fresh start, in which we firmly dedicate ourselves to the achievement of reconciliation, tolerance and mutual trust...”¹⁰⁸

The projection of inclusivity and impartiality within our places of work and public service delivery is an essential foundation to making policing a permissible career for people from all communities. Symbolism is an emotive issue within our community and is particularly so for those who have

grown up in the local area and lived through conflict.

“Yes there were bombs and mortar attacks on the station but there was also UDR men and paratroopers who were coming out who were psychopaths and who wronged the community.”

- Elected Representative

“[We] need a big gap to be put between RUC of the past and PSNI of now and the future i.e. an inclusive organisation representing all of us.”

- Elected Representative

To move forward, the Review raises the question about the prominent position of police memorials in South Armagh stations and whether they are a barrier to inclusion, particularly in the context of embracing a majority local community to work with and become part of policing.

“Businesses must tackle barriers to equality, such as...bias (both conscious and unconscious), over and above complying with legislation, to make real change.”¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁶ *Out of the darkness: policing and the death of George Floyd, The Police Foundation, 05/06/2020*

¹⁰⁷ *Page 5*

¹⁰⁸ *Exert from The Good Friday Agreement 1998*

¹⁰⁹ *Building Inclusive Workspaces, CIPD, September 2019:3*

This issue is further influenced by the ‘Promoting an Inclusive and Professional Policing Environment’ document which states, *“No-one should perceive that particular community backgrounds or political opinions have a protected place in our workplace, whether by design or through custom and practice... PSNI will proactively ensure that we take into account the perspectives of all and encourage challenge to our perceived organisational identity reflecting the policing values of public service, impartiality, transparency and integrity.”*¹¹⁰

Whilst Patten Recommendation 155 stipulated that, “police memorials in police buildings should remain as they are where they are”, it is proposed that, 20 years later, this now deserves reconsideration in the broader interests of progressing cultural change, inclusion and increased representativeness in South Armagh in 2020.

It is acknowledged that this issue is particularly sensitive and it is stressed that it is raised not to offend but in the interests of impartiality and moving forward. *“Positive change on inclusion can only come about through concerted, meaningful and intentional action.”*¹¹¹

Police and security service memorials are perceived differently by different sections of the community, depending on their experience and background. Memorials commemorating the past continue to have a profound impact on the police culture of today. This is particularly relevant for South Armagh where the level of police loss was great. This Review suggests that the station working environment in South Armagh has a negative impact on the mind-set of police officers who work there, extending to those who have no lived experience of conflict.

The Review raises the question about whether police memorials should be located in public areas or key station thoroughfares as ongoing reminders of the past with the associated impact on the effectiveness and impartiality of policing today.

The location and extent of current station memorials should be sensitively reviewed with a view to considering the provision of areas for reflection within stations. Such areas should be situated and designed to allow those who wish to do so to respectfully reflect on the past and remember the sacrifices of those that have gone before them.

¹¹⁰ May 2019

¹¹¹ Building Inclusive Workspaces, CIPD, Sept 2019:2

Confidence in Our Integrity

Over time, persistent underreporting, limited engagement and communication networks have had a detrimental impact on police understanding and awareness of what is really going on in the local community. This in turn has had an impact on our ability to effectively tackle crime and prevent harm.

An academic study in 2014 provides relevant consideration, *“enforcement styles of policing can increase mistrust in the local population, marginalise and alienate certain community members and prevent the flow of local information to the police. This lack of local intelligence then has a negative impact on effective police decision making and the deployment of resources, which in turn has the potential to impact on local accountability and confidence in the police organisation.”*¹¹²

This is a prevalent confidence issue which was raised consistently across the political and community spectrum.

“Contacts on the ground and information networks make a difference.”

- Elected Representative

“When I look at what the police data says about what is happening, it isn’t accurately reflecting what is really going on.”

- Elected Representative

“The community sees no result from complaints.”

- Elected Representative

“The view would be that the dogs on the street know who is involved in criminality in the area and people can’t understand why that’s not seeming to get through. The same people continue to be involved in the same activities.”

- Elected Representative

¹¹² Review of Evidence: What effect do enforcement-orientated and engagement-orientated methods of visible policing have on public confidence? Scottish Institute for Policing Research, July 2018:15

“Drugs are being openly dealt. In Crossmaglen drugs are being dealt under the eyes of the cameras at the base. That’s just not good enough and people in the community are seeing that on a nightly basis. Everybody knows who they are...People are running freely throughout South Armagh.”

- Elected Representative

“One of the biggest issues is that in an information vacuum people come up with their own ideas on what is going on and why.”

- Elected Representative

“Community perception is of political policing because a lot of crime is unaddressed, particularly in relation to drugs...There is a car park where town and country know there is drug dealing. Police don’t go there and they need to be visible...This makes people think that they are informants and causes tension. This raises the school of thought that there are others that should deal with it.”

- Community Restorative Justice Representatives

“The other problem is for some reason there are groups of people moving about who can steal and rob with impunity. Being from the area and with the history there is a perception that the reason for that is that they are giving information and in the pocket of the police or the other way around. It’s a concern, they do what they like. However, if I had a baldy tyre or no tax my feet wouldn’t touch the ground...There is that perception there, whether real or imagined, with most decent working people.”

- Local Resident

“There is a clear perception on the ground that some can operate with impunity and it seems to have proved very difficult to get any arrests and show that it is being effectively tackled.”

- Elected Representative

“Farmers have no faith in local police and feel that there is protection being given to those involved as not much is seen to be done. It is a real problem which was so bad that farmers refused to meet with the PSNI Chief Inspector lead 2 years ago. There is a lot of ill will.”

- Farming Community Representative

“There is a community-wide perspective that criminal gangs are operating with impunity and this is from local observations...People on the street know who these people are, they can walk about cocky and arrogant thinking they can get away with anything and they can... Generally in the community people think that these people are on the books.”

- Elected Representative

“To [get it wrong] 4/5 times it is either ineptitude or worse protecting him purposely.”

- Elected Representative

“A lot of incidents that happen just don’t make sense – it’s ether sheer incompetence or a ploy of some description...It is unbelievable that some of these people cannot be caught...As far as we are concerned police know exactly who is involved... It is ridiculous that everybody in the community and the police know who these people are and nothing is done...it is very frustrating for ordinary people who are trying to make things better.”

- Elected Representative

“Police are successful at some things, like mortar finds and bomb finds over the years however less robust and effective at attacks against the community.”

- Elected Representative

“In terms of serious organised crime – public confidence is probably at zero. People have built drugs empires with impunity. Guys that are surrounding them are arrested once or twice and then let go. They come out in the square in Crossmaglen with their chests out like they are untouchable.”

- Elected Representative

“PSNI are seen to turn a blind eye to criminality and people genuinely believe it is part of the Good Friday Agreement that those involved in illegal activity are allowed to do so. It feels like one rule for the rest of us. Stuff that you know is going on, how on earth is it not being dealt with?”

- Elected Representative

“There is feedback that police are not taking any action on drugs and criminality because persons involved are providing information.”

- Elected Representative

“There is an opinion that political policing still exists and I agree. It is blatantly obvious that there is political interference and motivation by those outside of the area, not local officers. That will reinforce opinions and make the job of local officers a lot harder.”

- Elected Representative

“We would give information and there would be the view that this is not actioned despite it being specific and accurate.... There is definitely an issue about how information that is passed is processed and who decides whether to act or not act. I would see that as a gap in your service.”

- Elected Representative

“It seems that someone who we have no name of and no face for is making decisions that constantly erodes the good work we have done.”

- Elected Representative

“Who is it that is controlling police on the ground - who decides?”

- Elected Representative

“Raises a lot of questions about trust and confidence and whether dirty tactics are still ongoing.”

- Elected Representative

This issue is a cause of significant concern due to implications for the local view of police integrity, ethics and procedural fairness. It reinforces the need for meaningful change to promote effectiveness, openness and accountability as the best means to counter this narrative and build trust in police service values and professionalism.

Local Accountability

Local accountability structures at DEA and Ward level were found to be insufficiently developed and not being used to maximum effect to facilitate meaningful dialogue and accountability between local police and the local community.

“The local accountability structure is not as effective as it should be and that is the police’s fault. As a funded worker I see it as my responsibility to progress things and make contact outside the meeting itself to move the thing on. Police just attend the meeting.”

- Community Restorative Justice Representatives

Whilst police reported that the PCSP provided a positive and productive working environment, the District-wide structure cannot be expected to effectively manage local accountability needs in the level of detail that is required.

“If you look at PCSP minutes from the last 10 years you will see these issues on policing being raised... again and again and again. PCSP was a vehicle that was not very responsive...[some recent positive change noted]...Police just come with statistics and the PCSP structure allows that to happen... No one has ever asked me or my community to input into the local policing plan.”

- Community Restorative Justice Representatives

Due to the extent of trust and confidence issues, every opportunity should be taken to demonstrate transparency and accountability in police processes, performance and decision making.

A formal strategy is required to coordinate regular engagement with community representatives and accountability structures to inform, engage and work in partnership with the local community.

Cross Border Policing and Community Safety

In reality, the border increases community safety risks to local residents. During consultation, the criticality of an effective and close working relationship between An Garda Síochána and Police Service of Northern Ireland was agreed.

“We have one foot in the North and one in the South so border policing is very important.”

- Elected Representative

With a total of 39 border crossing points and an interconnected road network, this is a pragmatic rather than political position. The cross border location means that the community is at heightened risk of burglary, excise fraud, organised and rural crime with criminals exploiting the border as a means of evading police in both jurisdictions. There is no bi-lateral agreement between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland to allow cross border patrolling or cross border ‘hot pursuit’¹¹³ between policing jurisdictions.¹¹⁴ In terms of effectiveness in preventing crime and bringing offenders to justice this presents a significant challenge for policing on both sides of the border.

“Cross border cooperation needs to be extended. Most things in Crossmaglen have a cross border element and you are allowing them to run rampant.”

- Elected Representative

“The area is a targeted crime area and both police need to work together more responsively... It makes sense to allow live time response.”

- Elected Representative

“It is totally crazy that PSNI are not allowed to cross the border in pursuit...Ambulances cross the border from Daisy Hill to Dundalk. Rescue services and Fire do it – why not police? It doesn’t make any sense...I would like to see more cooperation.”

- Elected Representative

“We all need to be working on the same team.”

- Elected Representative

“Transit routes for police personnel across the border should be considered in the interests of effectiveness..”

- Elected Representative

¹¹³ The term ‘hot pursuit’ is used to describe an incident where a suspect, being pursued by a police force, attempts to escape by crossing a border into another jurisdiction.

¹¹⁴ Article 41 Schengen Convention provides for hot pursuit by police from one European/Schengen member state into another. This provision does not apply to the border between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as neither participate in the Schengen area provisions. An EU precedent may exist which facilitates the pursuit on criminals over international borders. This would however not be accepted practice by police on either side of the border.

“There is also a case of giving chase at the border area, they know they will get away with it.”

- *Youth Outreach Worker*

“Concession Road, they have driven through police and that has to be stopped. There has to be a deterrent there that there is back up from Gardaí. It needs to be a tight working relationship and close communication.”

- *Local Representative*

“There needs to be some formal and more structured way of interacting between the two forces. There should be the ability of both forces to operate on both sides of the border to combat crime. This would have a big effect on community safety...It may be political but it is necessary to protect border communities – criminals do not respect borders. The two forces need to be able to operate in unison across border areas – this is about protecting communities and that should be the priority.”

- *Elected Representative*

Increased policing collaboration would also provide health and safety benefits for officers working in border areas. It does not seem logical or reasonable that police colleagues across the border cannot provide reassurance and mutual support to each other in circumstances where there is a risk to life or serious injury. The joint Cross Border Policing Strategy 2016 provides a, “*shared commitment to reach new heights of cooperation in serving communities in both jurisdictions.*”¹¹⁵

On this basis it is recommended that the issue of cross border patrolling and hot pursuit is given fresh consideration in consultation with the Department of Justice and Department of Justice and Equality with a view to facilitating this in defined circumstances.

¹¹⁵ Foreword by NI Department of Justice and Irish Department of Justice and Equality/An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt agus Comhionannais

Consultation with senior officers responsible for border policing in An Garda Síochána indicates support for developments of this nature.¹¹⁶ In addition, the following improvements were discussed and jointly agreed as having the potential to add value in principle:

- Increased cooperation in the front line operational environment, focusing on volume crime issues that affect the daily lives of local people.
- Daily communication between supervisors on resources and priorities, with increased use of the shared radio networks as standard practice - for shared situational awareness, reassurance and mutual support between operational resources operating along the border.
- A cross border accountability mechanism at local level with joint reporting by PSNI and AGS, focusing on day to day operational demand and outcomes with potential alignment to PCSP and Joint Policing Committee structures.
- Effective public communication of joint activity to reassure the local community and increase confidence in policing.

The greatest risk to police officers working in South Armagh is arguably presented by vehicles on the roads, making off towards the border. Currently there is no coordinated pursuit capability between jurisdictions. Due to the high risk nature of vehicle pursuits, the development of a command and control and pursuit prevention protocol is recommended as a means of increasing effectiveness whilst minimising risk to the public and maximising the safety of police officers.

¹¹⁶ Chief Superintendent level

Conclusion

This Review concludes by identifying a total of 50 recommendations for change. It is envisaged that this will require a 3-5 year dedicated programme of work.

The narrative within the main body of the report is designed to support and explain recommendations and it is important that they are interpreted in this context.

Changes are considered necessary to align the South Armagh policing model to standard organisational practice and to build confidence and support for policing in the interests of community safety.

Community representatives have consistently demonstrated their support for policing throughout the course of this Review, with a clear commitment to playing their part in effecting meaningful change. This positive contribution is both acknowledged and valued. It is essential that community involvement is sustained and further developed to ensure that local people feel engaged in the process of co-designing their future policing model. It is also important that independent representatives from the local community have a role in holding the Police Service to account for delivery of recommendations. Critical feedback and active community involvement is to be welcomed as the best means of developing an effective and accountable local policing model that has the confidence of the local community.

It should also be acknowledged that there were clear indications of a willingness and enthusiasm by local officers to play their part in working together with the community to build trusting and productive relationships and to provide a visible and positive policing presence in South Armagh.

Whilst current demand for policing services does not support the present levels of resource, a sustained investment in officer numbers is needed to make progress and resolve the inadequacies of current arrangements. Going forward, this resource should work with a very different focus, namely engagement and neighbourhood policing.

The recommendations which follow are designed to provide the leadership, structure and vision to enable that to happen.

“... [I]t is important to understand that securing policing by consent is not like many other public policy challenges. It is not something that can be done in one year and then forgotten about the next. The work is never complete...Police legitimacy has to be reviewed constantly, every hour of every day, in the practice of police officers and in the way they relate to members of the public.”¹¹⁷

- *The Police Foundation, 2020*

¹¹⁷ *Out of the darkness: policing and the death of George Floyd – The Police Foundation, 05/06/2020*

Recommendations

01 South Armagh Area Commander

An additional Chief Inspector post should be added to the D District HR establishment with dedicated geographical responsibility for Slieve Gullion DEA. This officer will be accountable for delivering changes recommended under the South Armagh Policing Review and will provide day to day leadership to facilitate a transition towards a normalised policing model in partnership with the local community. It is anticipated that this post will be required for a period of 3-5 years, with initial review after 2 years.

02 Revised Policing Model

There is an identified need for increased investment in South Armagh in order to build legitimacy and confidence in policing. Going forward, neighbourhood policing should be front and centre of policing delivery in the area. An enhanced neighbourhood policing team should be established with increased hours of coverage to provide greater levels of visible policing and a dedicated focus on engagement. The team should be resourced by a minimum of 1 Inspector, 3 Sergeants and 30

Constables, operating variably to meet local need. This is in excess of the required resource to meet current demand but is considered necessary to address the scale of development that is required.

Consistent with standard organisational practice, Local Policing Team response should be delivered centrally from Newry. 3 Sergeant and 30 Constable posts should transition to the centralised LPT establishment to facilitate this change, providing increased resilience and flexibility in resourcing.

03 Slieve Gullion Neighbourhood Policing Team

Slieve Gullion Neighbourhood Policing Team should be used as the official team name and branding for all officers working in the South Armagh area. This is to encourage better alignment and coverage across DEA structures and wards.

04 Selection

A neighbourhood policing role in South Armagh offers significant professional development opportunities and job satisfaction for interested officers and it should

be promoted accordingly across the wider organisation. Existing officers with more than 3 years' service in South Armagh who no longer feel invested in service delivery under 'post-Review' arrangements should be facilitated with an appropriate transfer, when possible. This is considered important both in the interests of providing a responsive, community focused services and officer wellbeing.

A values based selection process should be implemented to facilitate transfer into posts in South Armagh. Succession planning should be formalised to ensure continuity of personnel with a stipulation of a one month notice period on transfer or promotion to facilitate a dedicated handover process.

05 Diversity

The benefits of increasing diversity of officers within South Armagh should be promoted with a view particularly to ensuring gender and length of service aligns broadly to corporate LPT/NPT levels in the longer term. Probationary Constables should be directly allocated to the team acknowledging that the experiential learning opportunities to deliver high quality community policing are significant.

06 South Armagh Police Station

An improved police station presence and culture is of critical importance to police-community relations. Crossmaglen Police Station is no longer considered fit for purpose in delivering accessible and responsive policing. This is based on a combination of factors, including accessibility, capacity and impact on the local community. Options for site closure should be explored as a matter of priority with a view to facilitating redevelopment and regeneration.

Whilst a new purpose built station site is preferred for policing delivery in the longer term, it is acknowledged that the current economic climate is unlikely to allow for this (although this should be explored). As an alternative, Newtownhamilton Police Station should be rebranded as South Armagh Police Station, providing a centralised and accessible base for policing with the community in Slieve Gullion DEA. All officers attached to Slieve Gullion Neighbourhood Team should report directly to South Armagh Police Station at the commencement and termination of duty.

The existing station complex should be redeveloped to:

- Improve the exterior appearance and replace the perimeter fencing so that it is more open and welcoming
- Reduce exterior security measures at the front entrance to facilitate the movement of traffic and/or parking
- Create a welcoming and accessible enquiry office with increased opening hours and dedicated public meeting facilities
- Refurbish internal workspaces to better meet the needs of a modern and progressive workforce. This should include contemporary organisational branding and messaging, facilities and equipment.
- Rebalance the emphasis on the past by exploring the relocation of memorials to an agreed space in the station away from public locations and main thoroughfares. This would provide a more respectful private space for reflection on the losses and trauma of the past.

Additionally, audits of the workplace environment should be undertaken to ensure that buildings reflect the current vision and values of the Police Service. Internal imagery should include up to date corporate branding and imagery that reflects the role of modern community-focused policing within the locality of South Armagh. A review of internal notice board facilities should also be considered in line with work undertaken at the Police College to replace them with electronic messaging facilities that keep messaging up to date and relevant. This should include a review of branding, imagery and message facilities on the exterior of the police estate.

07 Slieve Gullion Area Inspector

This officer should perform a critical role under revised arrangements, working closely with the new Area Commander and providing a visible point of contact for the development of community relationships and assurance to neighbourhood teams. The Slieve Gullion Area Inspector should be based in the new South Armagh Police Station complex, taking an active role in implementing recommended changes.

08 Performance Management Framework

A Performance Management Framework should be developed as the basis for local policing activity, so that individuals and teams know what they should be doing, how they should be doing it and that they are responsible for contributing to identified strategic objectives.

The Performance Management Framework should utilise outcome-based accountability methodology within the Policing Plan 2020 - 2025, framed against achieving enhanced visibility, accessibility, responsiveness and community focus. The Framework should monitor policing activity which demonstrates visibility and engagement as a priority. It should also provide a structure for accountable reporting to community partners along with mechanisms for obtaining community feedback/perspective on performance against outcomes.

External/independent cultural audit and monitoring mechanisms should feature.

09 Revised Patrolling Strategy

The current Patrol Strategy is no longer fit for purpose. The style and tone of policing delivery must portray a visible, accessible and responsive service which makes effective use of available resource.

A revised Patrol Strategy should be produced to reflect a changed approach to police deployment. Community impact must be a central consideration and all tactical patrolling arrangements designed to facilitate visible, accessible, responsive and community focused impact. The key focus should be on changing community perspectives of heavy handed policing. The strategy should reflect uniform, equipment and style/ tone changes outlined in other Review recommendations, notably Recommendations 10 - 20.

10 The Patrol Profile

The patrol profile should be proportionate to the circumstances of report, determined by THRIVE assessment, rather than as a routine security response, determined by geography.

Visible resources at routine calls for service should be the minimum necessary. Additional resourcing may be appropriate, as support, based on nature of the call for service. Any additionally allocated resource should remain at a discreet tactical distance to allow for quick response.

11 Patrolling Strategy Governance

A weekly Patrol Strategy meeting should be chaired by the Area Chief Inspector, attended by the South Armagh Inspector and Sergeants on duty. Representation from LPT and specialist departments should be readily available at this meeting. This should inform decision making ensuring an evidence-based and accountable approach to tactical patrolling methods.

The meeting should adopt a formal governance structure and should include consideration of:

- identified threat, harm and risk issues affecting public and officer safety
- flexible adjustment of tactics to mitigate identified risks and facilitate responsive and accessible service delivery
- community priorities and feedback
- equipment and uniform
- training and development requirements

Inspector and Sergeants should ensure that this approach influences their daily review and management of patrolling.

12 Tactical Patrolling Training

A revised tactical patrolling training package should be designed in consultation with the Police College/Combined Operational Training. This should refresh and consolidate Patrol Strategy tactics, ensuring consistent performance in line with contemporary best practice standards with a focus on community impact.

The objective of police visibility is to facilitate police engagement at every opportunity.

13 Uniform

The new corporate uniform should be introduced at the earliest opportunity within the service-wide roll out.

Hi-visibility uniform should be routinely worn for visibility and reassurance and in the interests of officer health and safety.

Supervisors should ensure consistent practice in line with the Corporate Appearance and Protective Measures Standard and should actively role model required standards, including consistent wearing of name badges on outer uniform items.

14 Liveried Vehicles

All local and neighbourhood policing duties in South Armagh should be performed using liveried vehicles. There should be an immediate initial transition of 50% of the vehicle fleet to liveried armoured vehicles. Proactive efforts should be placed on increasing the proportion of liveried fleet with the intention that all LPT and NPT response will be from liveried vehicles within a 12-18 month period. This will require coordination at District level to ensure that sufficient liveried vehicles would be available to LPT officers responding to calls for service in South Armagh.

15 Armoured Vehicles

It is recommended that soft-skin/non-armoured vehicle capability should be introduced gradually within a 5 year period in the interests of normalised policing, improved attendance times, increased road safety and pursuit capability.

16 Firearms

G36 assault rifle weapons should no longer be routinely carried. Carriage of G36 weapons and the use of ancillary equipment such as kite sights should instead require an Inspector's authorisation.

All such authorisations should be documented along with the rationale and supporting evidence base.

Patrol profile is a strategic consideration and should be leader influenced and coordinated. The use of G36 weapons systems should be subject to monthly audit and oversight to ensure use is proportionate and justifiable. In operations where carriage of G36 weapons is deemed to be appropriate, planning should ensure that carriage is discreet rather than overt, as a means of striking an appropriate balance between community impact and security requirements.

17 Tasking Protocols

Resource tasking protocols should be brought in line with standard organisational call verification and dispatch processes.

Dedicated engagement with Contact Management Centre should take place to ensure a positive collaborative working relationship is developed and that there is mutual reassurance regarding risk management processes. The potential for bespoke learning and development should be explored to ensure that call handlers and dispatchers have a consistent level of local awareness and tailor their approach to provide reassurance and enhance community confidence in formal reporting.

18 Beat and Cycle Patrol

Visible patrolling on foot and bicycle should be coordinated across all DEA ward areas as a priority activity to facilitate engagement and increase reassurance.

Planning and coordination should be influenced by best practice approaches in other Districts to ensure appropriate risk mitigation and officer reassurance is in place.

Personnel and bicycle carrying vehicles should be sourced to enable effective and safe deployment of cycle patrols into all villages across the rural area. The potential to introduce e-bike equipment should also be explored.

19 Road Policing Operations (Vehicle Check Points)

All road policing operations should have clarity of purpose and respond to identified community priorities. The look and feel of such operations should be carefully considered to minimise community impact and avoid legacy associations. Consideration to the provision of visible signage which can be deployed to inform and reassure the public about the reasons for police presence should be a priority.

20 Body Worn Video

Body Worn Video should be consistently utilised and proactively supervised as a means of providing additional reassurance and accountability. Monitoring should be incorporated in performance arrangements. Routine dip sampling of interactions should be conducted by supervisors.

21 Daily Briefing Structure

All officers attached to Slieve Gullion should receive face to face briefings from supervisors at the commencement of each turn of duty, utilising the corporate briefing tool best practice structure.

The following topics should be included as a minimum:

- local community issues and policing priorities (operational and engagement focus)
- security and other information which would impact on threat, harm and risk
- style and tone of delivery and patrol profile

Close and regular communication should be maintained between Neighbourhood and Local Policing Team Sergeants and Inspectors.

A team debrief should take place at the end of each turn of duty, where possible, to facilitate situational awareness, learning and development.

22 Intelligence Briefings

All officers performing duties in South Armagh should receive dedicated interactive briefing from C3 on a monthly basis. The frequency and format of intelligence briefings should be reviewed after an initial 6-12 month period.

23 Analysis and Evidence Base

Analytical product should be proactively sought on an ongoing basis and utilised as a means of establishing an evidence base to focus on geographical and thematic areas and monitor progress against identified priorities.

24 Operational Collaboration

The effectiveness of interventions against organised criminality is critical to developing community trust and confidence in policing.

All operations led by specialist departments or external agencies should be overseen by/planned collaboratively with the District

Senior Management Team to ensure that community impact considerations are central to planning and decision making processes at every stage. This should include early engagement, maximum information sharing and proactive consequence management. All proactive operational activity should complement and prioritise the objective of building local trust and confidence.

25 Service-wide Consistency and Accountability

All non-local resources carrying out policing activities in South Armagh should be accountable to local management for the style and tone of delivery and patrol profile.

All bids for Operational Support Department resource should be supported by a dedicated briefing package to ensure additional resources are used to maximum effect against identified community priorities in a manner consistent with the revised local policing approach.

The development of an electronic video brief is recommended to ensure that there is a senior management level briefing on expectations of style and tone of delivery.

26 Local Planning

All event and operational planning functions should transition from the Crossmaglen LPT 'Ops' Sergeant to be managed centrally at Area level, consistent with the standard corporate approach. Collaborative working relationships should be developed to facilitate this transition.

27 Local Policy and Planning Documentation

All operational instructions, plans and local policies should be reviewed and redrafted to meet the needs of new structures and working arrangements.

28 Operational Orders

The format and content of operational orders should be developed in line with best practice approaches. Documentation should be individually tailored to the specific circumstances of operations with an increased focus on community impact and the style/tone of police deployment. Appropriate quality assurance mechanisms should be in place to ensure alignment with other recommendations.

29 Structured Formal Briefing

All officers deployed to operations should receive a structured formal briefing with a clear emphasis on the style, look and feel of operational police presence. Operational debriefs should be utilised to promote operational learning and development.

30 Confidence and Engagement Strategy

A renewed and priority focus should be placed on engagement as the basis for improving local trust and confidence in policing. To this end, an outcomes-based confidence and engagement strategy should be produced to:

- refocus officers on the concept of engagement as an integral aspect of all operational policing activity.
- stipulate clear roles, responsibilities and accountability at Constable, Sergeant, Inspector and Chief Inspector level.
- outline communications principles with elected community representatives in relation to ongoing and planned policing activity.
- proactively develop policing presence on print and social media platforms, to include increased understanding of and interaction with existing community information platforms.

- clarify local accountability structures.

The strategy should reflect the content of changes outlined in other Review recommendations, particularly Recommendations 31 - 40.

31 NPT Ward and Portfolio Allocation

NPT Constables should be allocated both a geographical ward area and thematic portfolio for dedicated focus. Ward Area Beat Plans and thematic plans should be developed by officers to ensure there is shared understanding and a strategy for managing issues relevant to geographic ward areas and themes across the DEA e.g. drugs, domestic abuse, mental health/vulnerability, cross border policing, serious and organised crime, rural crime, children and young people, older people, newcomer and minority communities and businesses etc.

Resilience and information sharing arrangements should be in place within teams to ensure continuity of service in the event of abstraction or absence.

32 Stakeholder Analysis

A formal stakeholder analysis should be conducted to develop and document community networks and contacts at DEA and ward level,

representative of the community. This information should remain under continuous review and form the basis for gap analysis and planning. Engagement networks progressed under the Review's consultation process should be used to inform this work.

33 Local Accountability Structures

Partnership working should be maximised as a means of delivering on policing priorities through established community, voluntary and statutory sector groups.

Community representatives and partners should be provided with clarity on police internal working arrangements as a basis for open and accessible working relationships. Good practice formats such as the Information Leaflet on Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership Locality Planning Groups should provide inspiration.

Police reporting to local accountability meetings should be formalised in the Confidence and Engagement Strategy. Meetings should be attended by officers at a rank appropriate to the group membership and objectives. As a minimum this should involve a formal monthly accountability meeting with representation from across ward areas.

34 Independent Advisory Group

An Independent Advisory Group should be established to increase the diversity of perspective on policing style and delivery approach. The role and purpose should include provision of critical feedback on performance against the implementation of recommendations under this review in order to maximise co-design and accountability.

35 Community Information Networks

Neighbourhood Watch should aim to complement and enhance existing community infrastructure. Focus should be placed on increasing understanding and engagement with existing community information and alert networks. Opportunities should be sought to innovate and co-design solutions that meet the regulatory requirements of policing whilst adding value and building trust.

36 Direct Contact

A duty mobile phone should be carried by Sergeants to allow local representatives and community partners to reliably and efficiently make direct contact with their local team.

37 Local Police Drop-In Sessions

Proactive efforts should be made to identify appropriate places for 'Local Police Drop-In Sessions' across all ward areas. These should provide an opportunity for direct contact and engagement with local officers, allowing issues of concern to be discussed and crime prevention advice to be provided. The location, timing and style of these events should be designed in partnership with local representatives and established community groups.

38 Minority Languages

Opportunities should be explored to promote the use of minority languages in official communications and correspondence. One potential consideration may be the use of Irish language messaging on signage outside South Armagh Police Station in line with commitments under the Fresh Start Agreement.¹¹⁸

39 Community Impact

Community impact considerations should be central to all local policing activity. There should be an increased and consistent use of community impact assessment as a basis for operational decision making.

Community impact assessments should be formally documented and subject to regular monitoring and strategic oversight. They should provide guidance on information sharing with community representatives to promote meaningful dialogue before, during and after operations. Advice on embedding a best practice approach should be sought from Policing with the Community Branch.

40 Vulnerability Focus

An enhanced focus should be placed on vulnerability, recognising the increased potential for harm where existing barriers to reporting caused by low levels of trust and confidence in policing are exacerbated by additional barriers, e.g. domestic abuse, LGBT, other minority communities.

This should include training, research, analysis, benchmarking and thematic action planning.

41 Continuous Professional Development

Officer training and development should be a key strategic priority under revised arrangements, with appropriate senior oversight and identification of training needs. A Continuous Professional Development Plan should be developed commensurate with the complexity of work required to develop trust and confidence in policing.

Consideration should be given to geographical and cultural awareness; enhanced vulnerability; legacy, trauma and reconciliation; cross border policing structures; leadership inputs such as emotional intelligence/unconscious bias; community development; restorative justice; team building e.g. Insights.

¹¹⁸ A Fresh Start: The Stormont Agreement and Implementation Plan – Northern Ireland Executive. Section “F”, Paragraph 68 – “The UK Government and the Irish Government, recalling commitments from previous Agreements and recognising the importance of understanding, tolerance and respect in relation to linguistic diversity, endorse the need for respect for and recognition of the Irish language in Northern Ireland, consistent with the Council of Europe Charter on Regional or Minority Languages.”

42 Training Governance

Governance and accountability mechanisms should be implemented for training delivery, aligned to recommendations under the Police College District Training Review. The potential for South Armagh to be used as pilot area for implementation of District Training Review recommendations should be explored.

43 Neighbourhood Policing Development Programme

The Neighbourhood Policing Development Programme should be redeveloped and enhanced to meet local needs. This should develop thinking around the policing purpose, community focus and barriers to engagement. It is essential that officers have a balanced understanding of emotional legacy issues which remain relevant to policing today. A positive and respectful narrative on the local area is important.

External community input will be critical to the success of this initial training input with consideration of options for an externally delivered training package. The potential for design and accreditation with a Higher Education Institute partner should be explored.

44 Team Dynamics

Regular team building workshops should take place with a focus on interpersonal relationships, information sharing/awareness building and innovation on thematic portfolios and ward areas.

45 Cross Border Patrolling and Hot Pursuit

A bi-lateral policing agreement should be explored with the Northern Ireland Department of Justice and Irish Department of Justice and Equality with the aim of facilitating joint rather than parallel policing operations by PSNI and AGS. As a minimum this should enable cross border hot pursuit between policing jurisdictions in the interests of community safety and policing effectiveness.

46 Cross Border Accountability

A cross border accountability mechanism should be established at local level with bi-annual reporting by PSNI and AGS on joint cross border performance priorities.

This should focus on day to day operational demand and outcomes affecting cross border communities in the South Armagh areas. This should be incorporated formally under the auspices of PCSP and Joint Policing Committees.

47 Cross Border Command and Control

A cross border command and control protocol should be developed with a focus on the management of police pursuits. This should clarify operational structures for increased understanding, rapid communication, risk management and decision making.

48 Cross Border Communications

There should be increased policing collaboration in the front line operational environment.

- All operational officers should have access to and monitor shared radio networks as a matter of standard practice, overseen by Southern Contact Management Centre.
- Routine daily telephone briefings should take place between supervisors from both policing jurisdictions to ensure working relationships are developed and information sharing/situational awareness is increased.
- Weekly cross-border 'Pacesetter' meetings should take place, chaired at Inspector level or above.
- A cross border external communications plan should be jointly developed, focusing on daily policing activity and local community priorities.

Communications opportunities should be proactively sought at operational, tactical and strategic level to demonstrate joint working.

49

Cross Border Development and Governance

Formal monthly meetings should take place to develop, coordinate and progress cross border collaboration. These meetings should be co-chaired by a Superintendent from each policing jurisdiction.

Opportunities should be sought for team building and joint development workshops between officers working in areas bordering South Armagh.

50

Accountability Arrangements for Implementation Process

Recommendations under this Review create a significant opportunity to develop engagement, confidence and legitimacy in local policing arrangements. There is a leadership responsibility to progress cultural change. Local leadership is critical to embedding and sustaining changes in South Armagh, in close partnership with local community representatives. It is therefore vital that the South Area Coordinator (Chief Superintendent) and District Commander (Superintendent) demonstrate ownership of and responsibility for the implementation process at a local level.

A developed understanding of the purpose and intent behind recommendations is critical to ensuring that changes are implemented in a manner consistent with the ethos and aspirations of the Review. For this reason, the Review Team should maintain involvement in implementation processes to maximise opportunities for meaningful change.

In accordance with Recommendation 34, an Independent Advisory Group should be established to provide critical feedback on the implementation of recommendations. This group should be constituted so as to provide diversity of perspective, co-design opportunities and accountability.

Consideration should be given to partnering with an academic partner/Higher Education Institute. This would ensure that learning is captured for the benefit of academic and professional policing at a local and national level.

Appendices

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

Context

In January 2020 PSNI Chief Constable Simon Byrne commissioned a review of policing in Newry, Mourne and Down Policing District (D District), focusing on border areas proximate to South Armagh in response to wide spread community concerns re the style, tone and accessibility of policing in border areas. Concerns specifically related to whether the current policing approach is appropriately aligned to community expectations of a neighbourhood policing model.

Purpose

To ensure that models of service delivery are responsive to the local environment and have empathy with the local community context.

The values of the Police Service are *“We care, We listen, We act”* and we will, therefore, reflect and open ourselves to challenge in the interests of organisational learning and development.

It is our strong intent to build confidence and support for policing across the community and thereby enhance the safety and well-being of the local community.

Aim

To evaluate the current model of local service delivery, providing options and recommendations that will facilitate:

- Visible;
- Accessible;
- Responsive, and;
- Victim-focused policing.

Objectives

A project plan will be developed to include:

- **Organisational Culture**
 - Perceived policing image
 - Organisational identity
 - How threat and risk informs culture, mind-set and approach.
- **Policing Style**
 - An effective policing response model
 - Accessible, visible and responsive neighbourhood policing
 - Local Police fleet
 - Local police uniform, tactics and equipment
 - AGS Collaboration

Appendix A: Terms of Reference

- **Accessibility and visibility**
 - Locations of police stations
 - Police station look and feel
 - Community accessibility
 - Clarity of purpose
- **Community Engagement**
 - Social Media Use
 - Effective Public Communication
 - Building Legitimacy
- Leadership

Scope

- District Policing Command model within the geographical area of South Armagh incorporating the local policing areas of Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton
- Frontline Local Policing Team and Neighbourhood Policing Team functions including presence, structure and engagement.
- Culture, image and identity pertaining to the local delivery model.
- Public relationship with policing including support and advocacy in place to develop policing legitimacy and normality.

Method

A team, incorporating the appropriate skills, experience and knowledge will be established to conduct an evidence-based review.

The review will involve primary and secondary data collection that includes close collaboration and consultation with the community.

Community Perspectives will be sought from;

- Local Residents
- Political and Social Perspectives
- Policing and Community Safety Partnership
- Business Representatives
- Faith Groups
- Other Parties, as appropriate

Operational Context and Capability will be informed by;

- Local Command
- Local Officers
- Headquarters Departments
- Benchmarked Comparators and Good Practice

Timeline

The review will provide a draft report, including recommendations, to Police Service of Northern Ireland Senior Executive Team by 31st July 2020. A final report, suitable for publication, will be available by 1st September 2020.

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Appendix C: Consultation Method

Internal Consultation

SMT	
District Commander	Direct Consultation
Chief Inspector Engagement Portfolio	
Chief Inspector Performance Portfolio	
Line Management	
South Armagh Inspector	Direct Consultation
NPT Sergeant Newtownhamilton	
LPT Sergeant Crossmaglen	
LPT Sergeant Newtownhamilton	
Community Planning Sergeant	
LPT Sergeant/ PFNI Representative	
LPT Sergeants Newtownhamilton	Written Feedback
LPT Inspectors	
LPT and NPT Constables	
Crossmaglen Section Representatives	Direct Consultation
Newtownhamilton Section Representatives Direct Consultation	
Newtownhamilton NPT representatives	
Departments	
CI Area D/Chief Inspector and D/Inspector	Written Feedback and/or Direct Consultation
CI Serious Crime D/Chief Inspector	
C2 TIU D/Chief Inspector	
C3 Area Intelligence Hub Coordinator - D/Chief Inspector	
C3 South Area Intelligence Hub D/Inspector	
C3 National Security D/Chief Inspector Direct Consultation	
C4 D/Inspector	
C5 Chief Inspector	
Operational Support Department - OSD Hub and TSG Inspector	
Estates Services Representatives	
JATF Co-Chair Superintendent	Direct Consultation
EU Exit Superintendent and Inspectors	
Direct Consultation	
Security Branch Sergeant	
Former Area Commander - Superintendent	

Appendix C: Consultation Method

External Consultation

Elected Representatives	
Aoife Finnegan, Sinn Fein Councillor, Slieve Gullion DEA	Direct Consultation
Barra O'Muirí, Sinn Fein Councillor, Slieve Gullion DEA	
David Taylor, UUP Councillor, Slieve Gullion DEA	
Declan Murphy, Sinn Fein Councillor, Slieve Gullion DEA	
Liz Kimmins, Sinn Fein MLA, Newry and Armagh Constituency	
Mickey Larkin, Sinn Fein Councillor, Slieve Gullion DEA	
Oonagh Magennis, Sinn Fein Councillor, Slieve Gullion DEA	
Pete Byrne, SDLP Councillor, Slieve Gullion DEA	
Roisín Mulgrew, Sinn Fein Councillor, Slieve Gullion DEA	
Terry Hearty, former Sinn Fein Councillor, Slieve Gullion DEA and outgoing chair Newry, Mourne and Down PCSP	
William Irwin, DUP MLA, Newry and Armagh Constituency	
Local Residents : Neighbourhood Watch Coordinators (28)	
Meigh	PCSP Facilitated Survey (22 responses)
Killeavy	
Dromintee	
Bessbrook	
Newtownhamilton	
Lissummon	
Poyntzpass	
Jerrettspass	
Local Residents: Community Associations/Residents Groups	
Bessbrook	PCSP Facilitated Survey (22 responses)
Camlough	
Crossmaglen	
Dorsey	
Dromintee	
Dungormley and Lir Grove	
Forkhill	
Jerrettspass	
Killean	
Lislea	
Meigh	
Mullaghbawn	
Newtownhamilton	CRJ Facilitated Survey (502 responses)
Independent Community Survey- all villages and towns, South Armagh	

Appendix C: Consultation Method

External Consultation

Facebook/Website Users	
Newry, Mourne and Down PSNI/PCSP	Social Media Request for Feedback(4 responses)
Business Owners Crossmaglen (2)	Direct Consultation
Education	
School Principals - post primary (2)	Direct Consultation
Education Authority - Youth Outreach Worker	
Education Authority - Senior Youth Worker	
Community	
Community Restorative Justice	Direct Consultation
GAA representatives (2)	
Health and Social Care Board Locality Development	
Children and Young People' Strategic Partnership Southern Area	
Men's Shed/ Newtown Together	
Newtownhamilton Community Association	
Rainbow Project Advocacy Service	
Start 360	
Sure Start South Armagh	
Ulster Farmers Union	
Catholic Church, Archdiocese of Armagh	Response to Letter
Statutory Partners: An Garda Síochána	
Chief Superintendent, Border	Direct Consultation
Superintendent, Monaghan	
D/Superintendent	
D/Inspector	
D/Sergeant	
Cross Border Tasking Unit	
Statutory Partners	
DEA Coordinator	Direct Consultation
PCSP Manager	
HMRC	Direct Consultation

Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings



Community Restorative Justice Newry / Armagh

Policing review in South Armagh Communities

Objective

In light of the controversial incident and photographs shared by the PSNI in Crossmaglen at Christmas 2019, the objective of this survey was to gather opinions on current delivery of policing within South Armagh. The survey provided an opportunity for people to express their opinions on the delivery of policing within their community.

Scope

The survey targeted members of the community from all villages and towns within the South Armagh area. The survey involved both male and female members of the community, over four age categories; *18 – 25, 26-40, 41-55 and 56+*.

The survey involved 12 questions and an additional comments box if required. The survey style was positive and negative questions relating to the perception of policing in the area. The compilers were required to select whether they *'Strongly Agreed, Agreed, Neither Agreed or Disagreed or Strongly disagreed'*.

The survey was carried out over the months of April to July 2020.

Findings

The following pages are the result of the survey. We received over 502 responses.

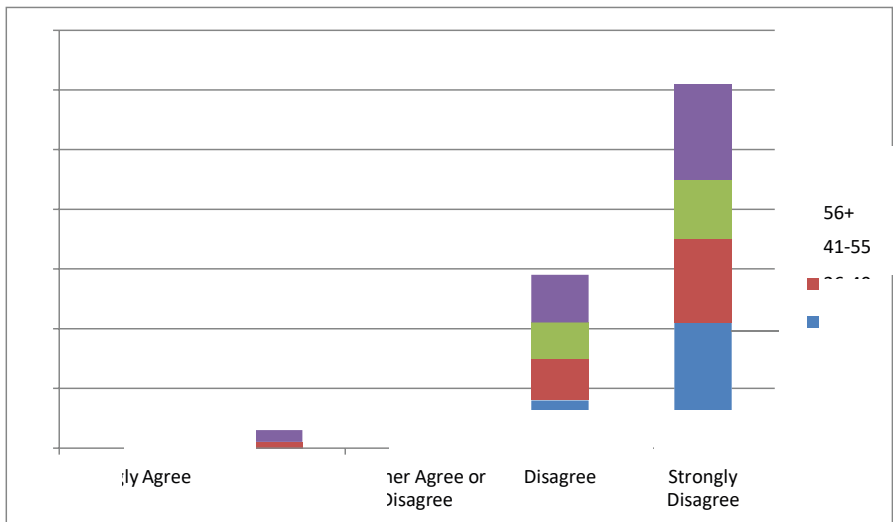
The graphs show the % per answer for each question, while displaying the proportion per age category for the relevant answer.

Section 1 is the results of the hard copy survey and section 2 are the results of the online survey.

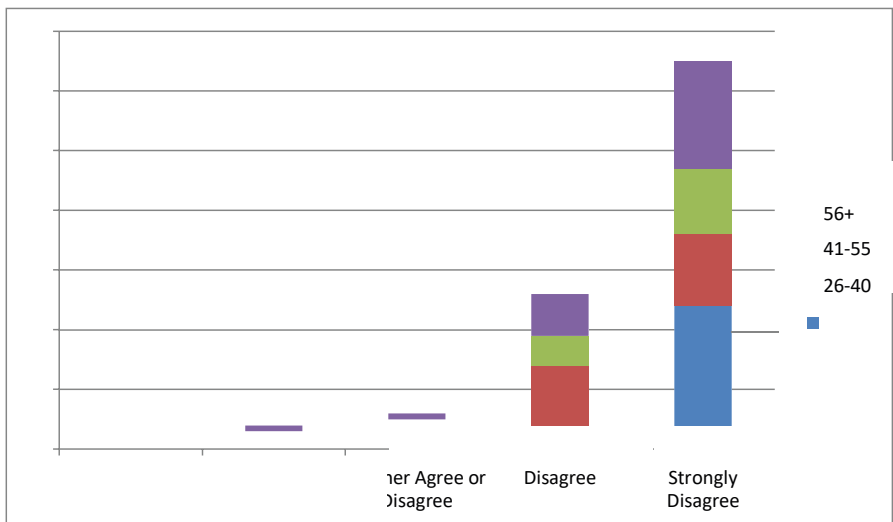
Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings

Section 1: Survey findings from 250 hard copy responses received.

1. Do you think the PSNI always do the best for your community?

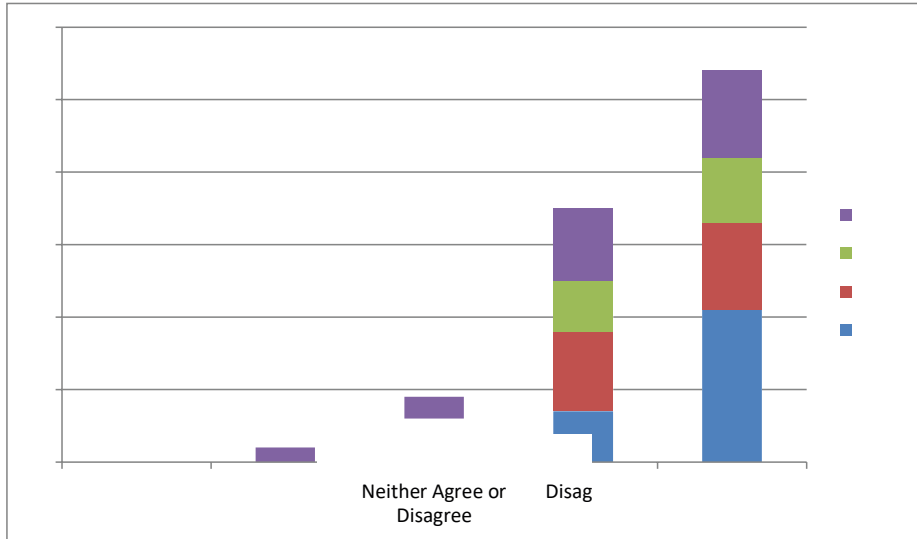


2. Do the PSNI always update the community around issues such as drugs / car crime?

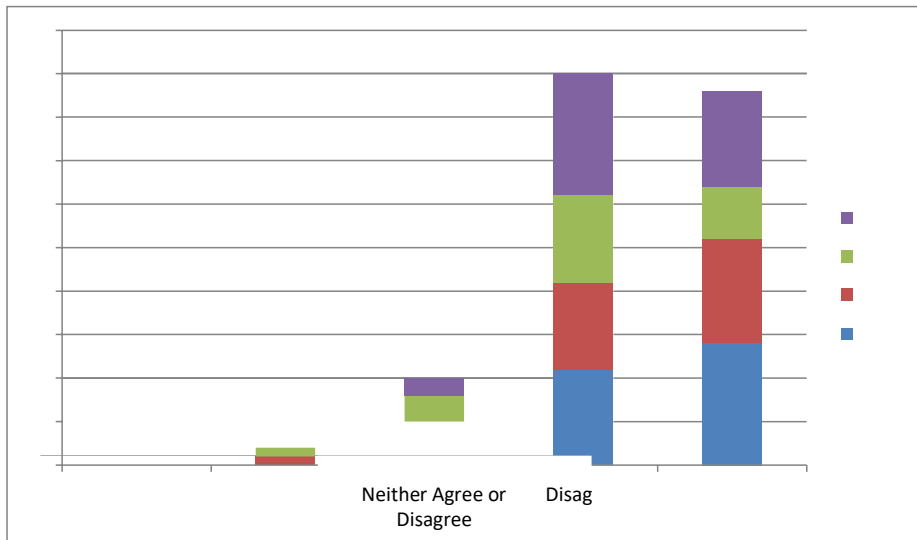


Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings

Do the PSNI treat people with respect?

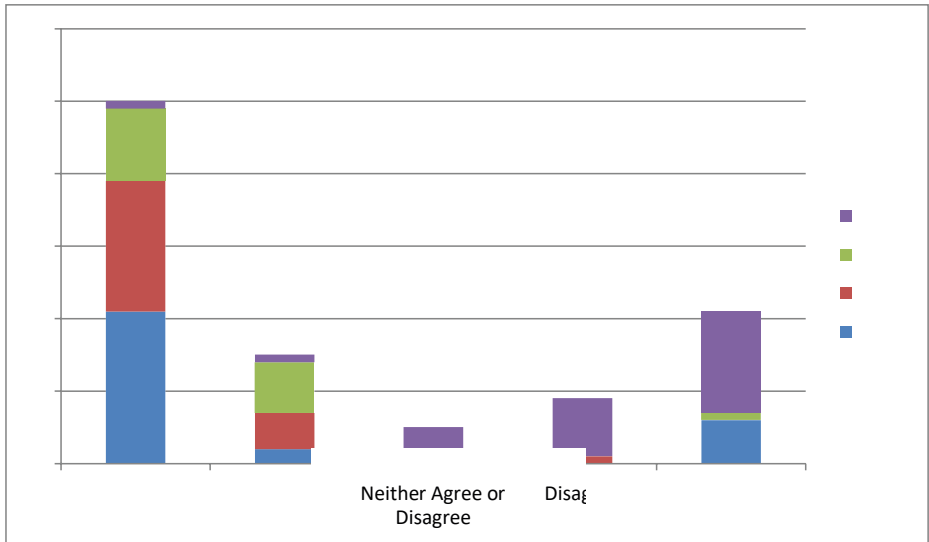


4. Do you believe the communities and the PSNI want the same outcome?

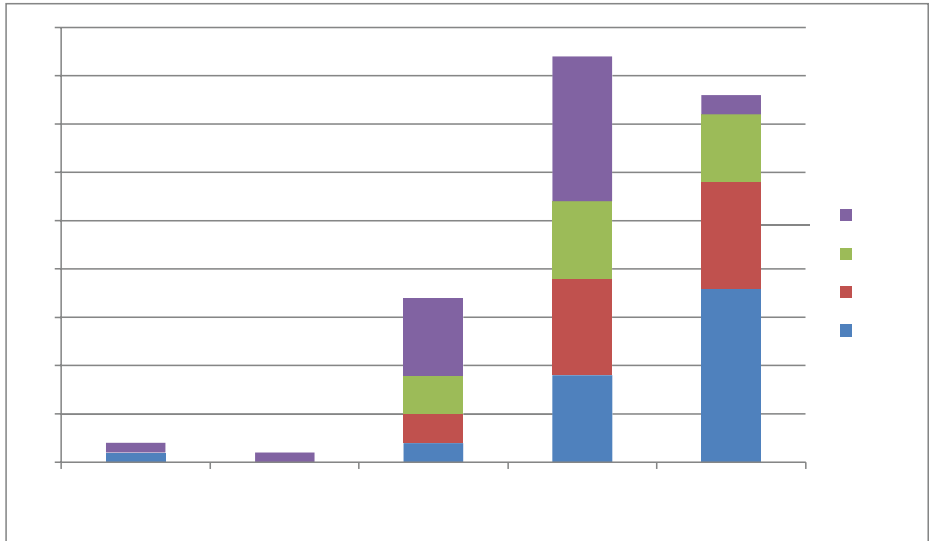


Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings

Do you believe that policing is delivered differently in South Armagh than in other areas?

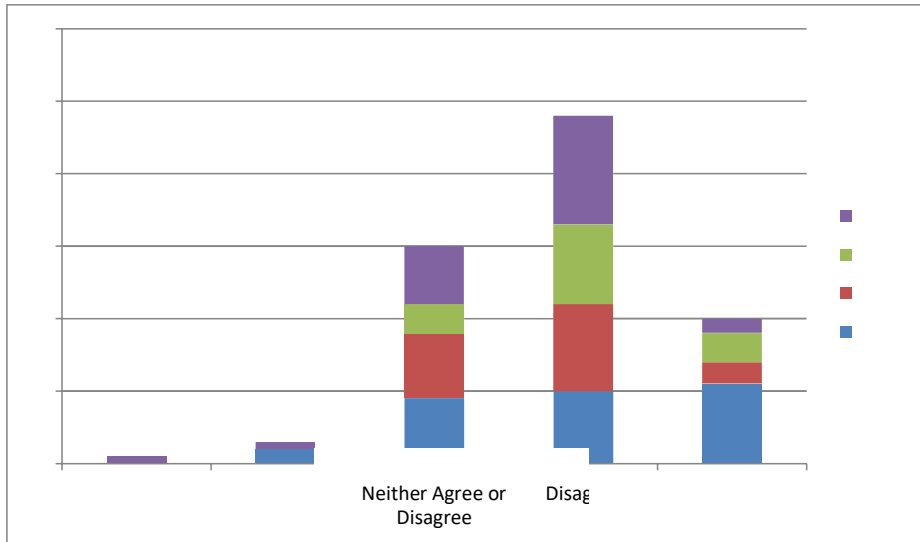


6. Do you believe the Police are responsive to community concerns?

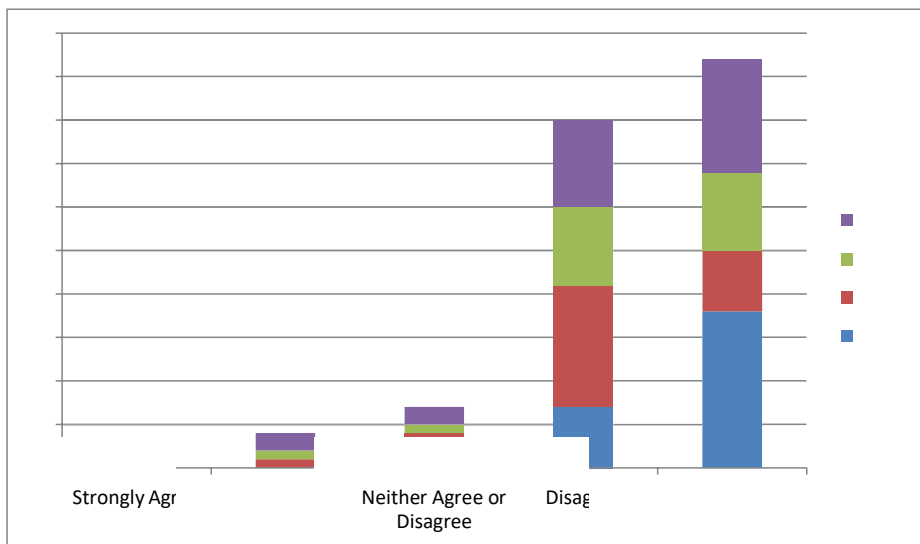


Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings

Do you think the PSNI prioritise what is most important to your community?

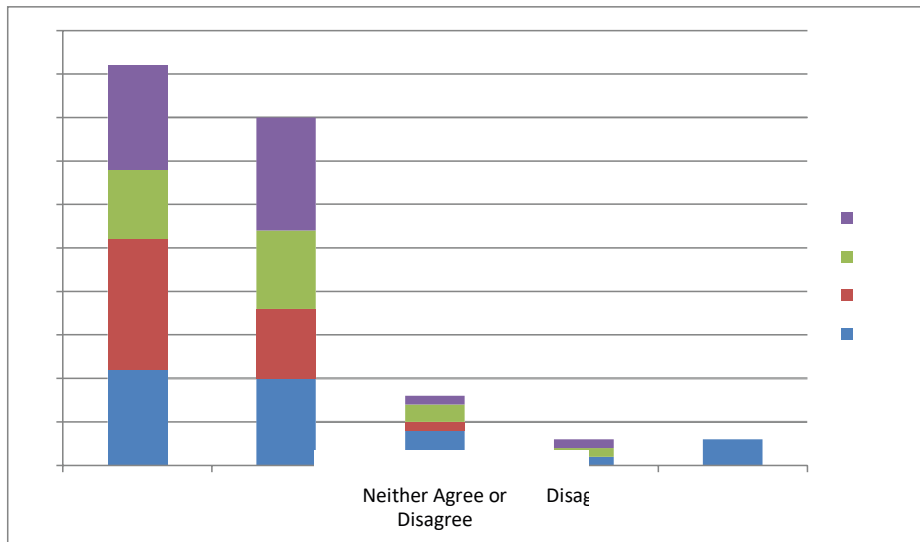


8. Do you believe the PSNI are always held accountable for wrong or inappropriate conduct in the community?

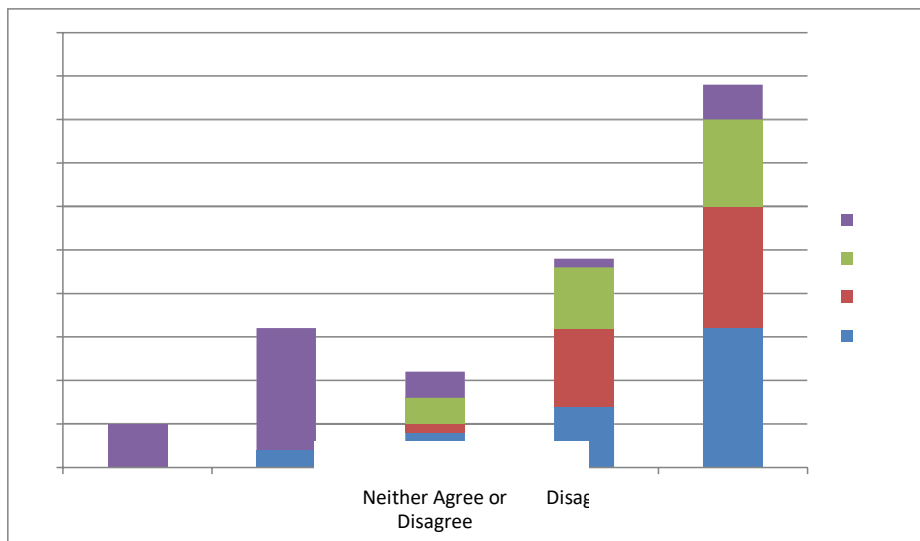


Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice - Survey Findings

People should obey the law because it benefits everyone in the community

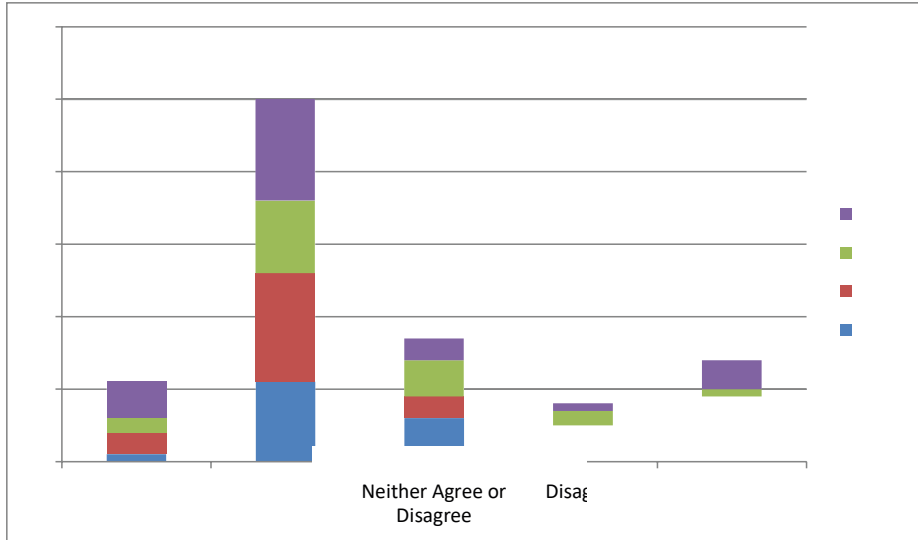


10. Do you believe the PSNI engage enough with your community?

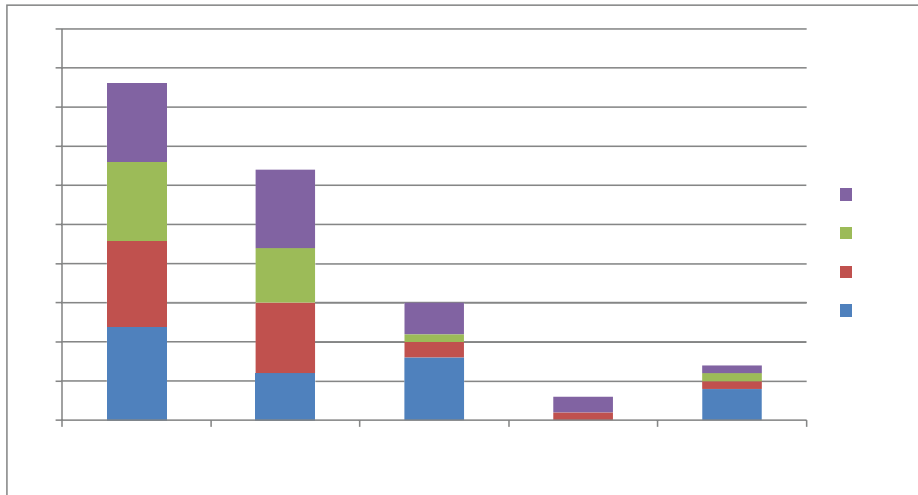


Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings

Would you report crime to the PSNI?



12. Do you think there should be more community involvement in a local policing plan?

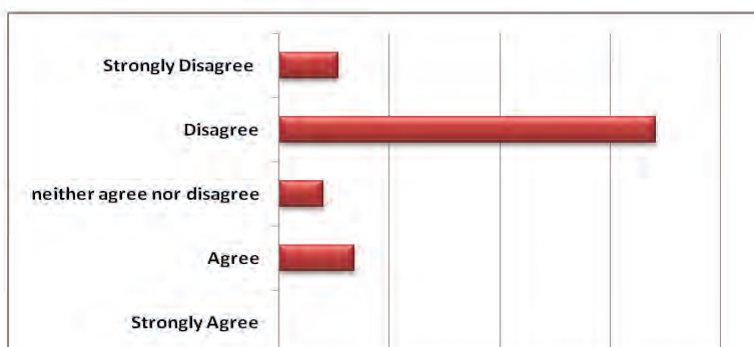


Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice - Survey Findings

Section 2: Survey findings from 254 online survey monkey responses received

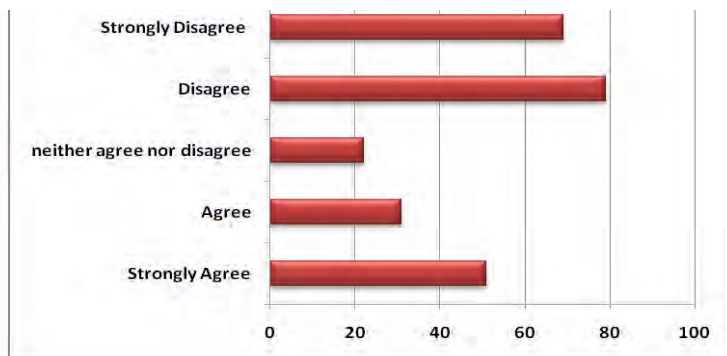
1. Do you think the PSNI always do the best for your community?

Neither agree nor disagree	



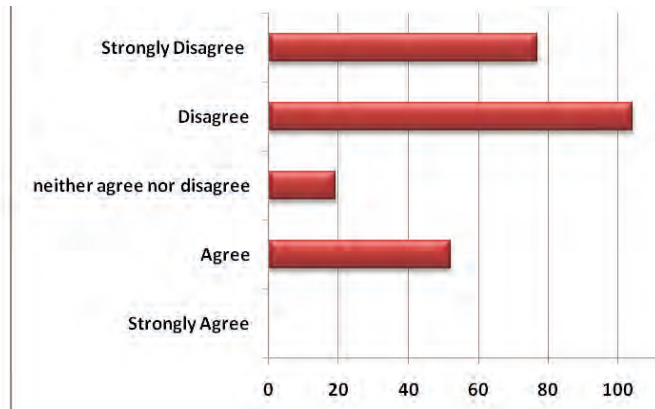
2. Do the PSNI always update the community around issues such as drugs / car crime?

Strongly Agree	51



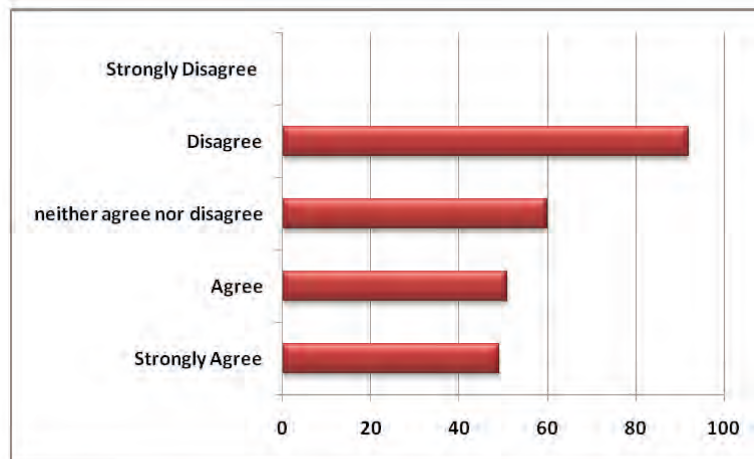
Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings

Strongly Agree	0
Strongly Disagree	77



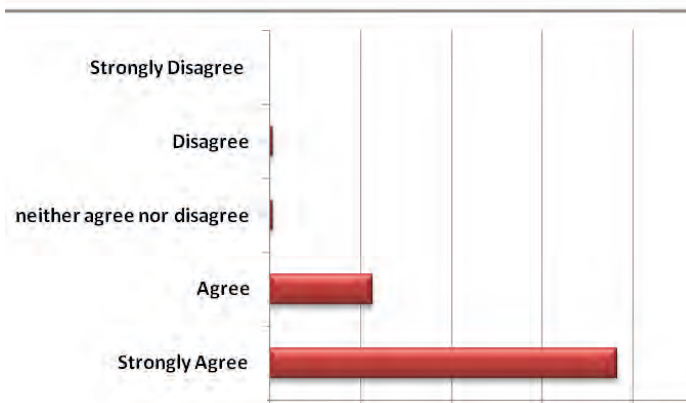
4. Do you believe the communities and the PSNI want the same outcome?

Disagree	92



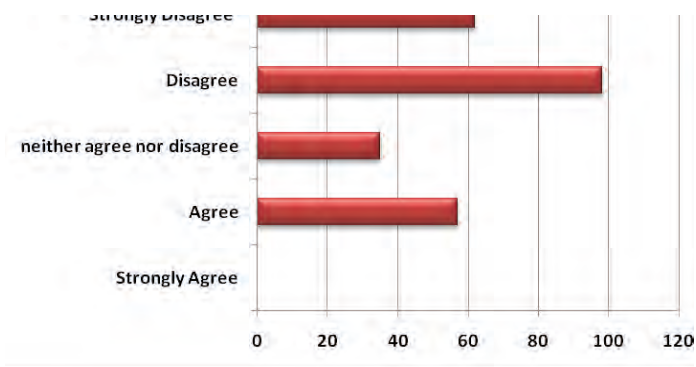
Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice - Survey Findings

Disagree	2



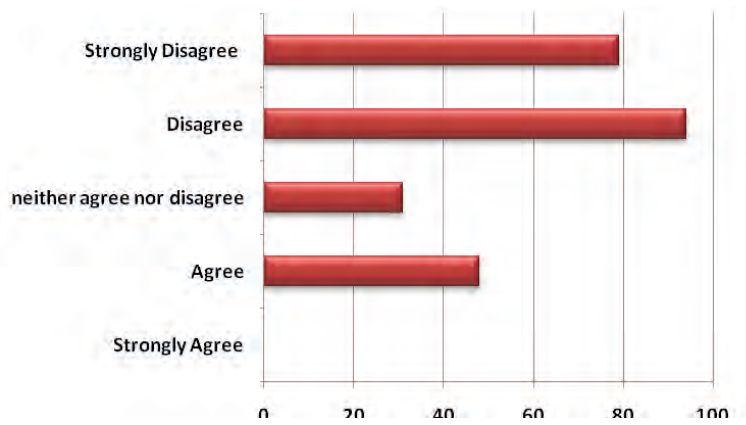
6. Do you believe the Police are responsive to community concerns?

Agree	57



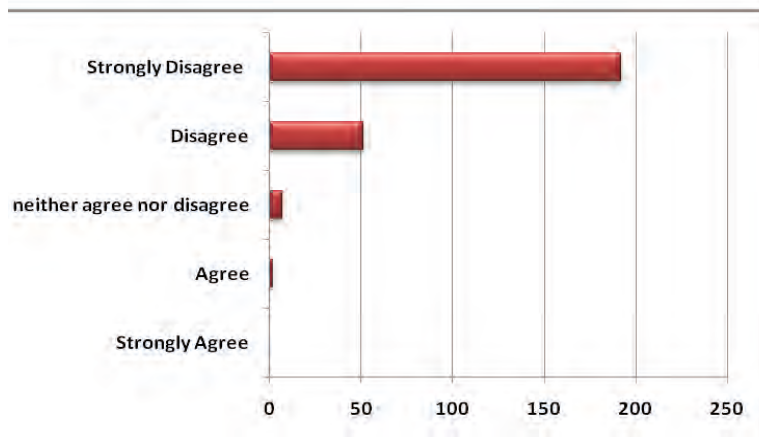
Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings

Strongly Disagree	79



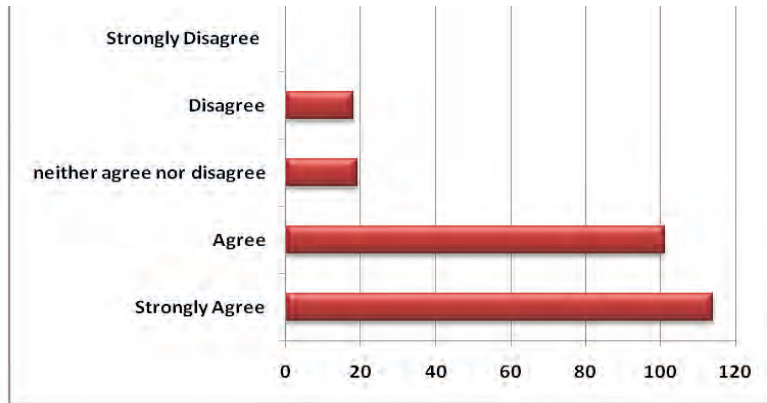
8. Do you believe the PSNI are always held accountable for wrong or inappropriate conduct in the community ?

Agree	2



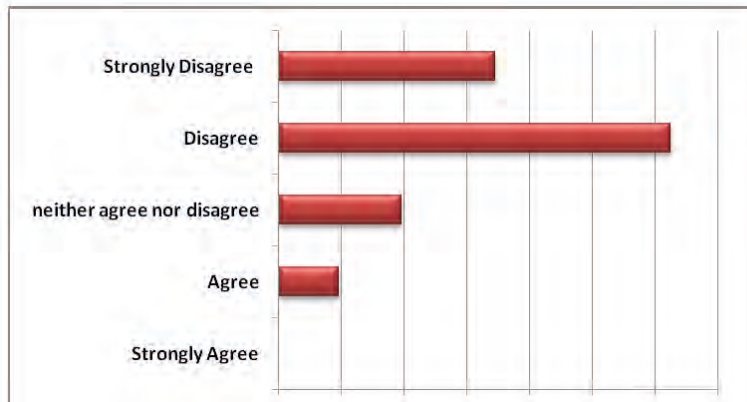
Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice - Survey Findings

Strongly Agree	114
Strongly Disagree	



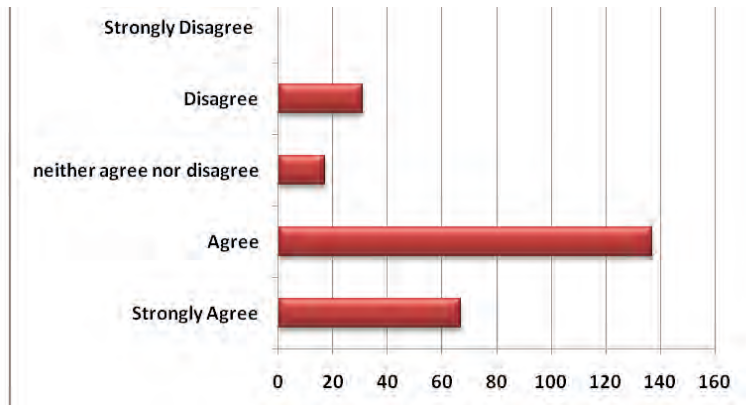
10. Do you believe the PSNI engage enough with your community?

Disagree	125



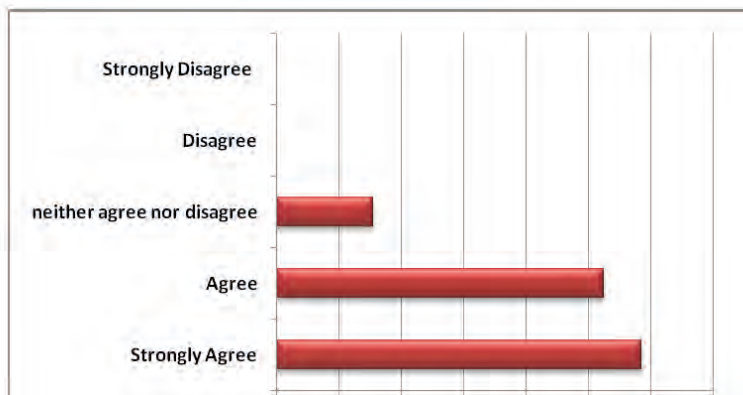
Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings

Strongly Agree	67
Strongly Disagree	



12. Do you think there should be more community involvement in a local policing plan?

Disagree	0



Appendix D: Community Restorative Justice – Survey Findings

Additional comments

- 40 – 55 ‘I have not had any issues with the police in my area’
- 18 – 25 ‘There should be more policing in the area’
- 18 – 25 ‘I have no faith in the police’
- 56+ ‘The only thing that has changed is their uniform’
- 25-40 ‘That picture does not represent our community’
- 18 – 25 ‘I know friends who have rang for the police and they have not come out’

Summary

1. 80% surveyed do not think the PSNI always do the best for their community
2. 91% surveyed do not think the PSNI always update their community around issues such as drugs / car crime
3. 89% surveyed do not think the PSNI treat people with respect
4. 88% surveyed do not believe the communities and the PSNI want the same outcome
5. 65% surveyed believe policing is delivered differently in South Armagh than other areas
6. 80% surveyed do not believe the Police are responsive to community concerns
7. 68% surveyed do not think the PSNI prioritise most important to their community
8. 87% surveyed do not believe the PSNI always are held accountable for wrong or inappropriate conduct in the community
9. 86% surveyed believe people should obey the law because it benefits everyone in the community
10. 68% surveyed do not believe the PSNI engage enough with their community
11. 61% surveyed would report crime to the PSNI
12. 75% surveyed feel there should be more community involvement in a local policing plan

Appendix E: PCSP Survey Summary 01/10/2020

This is a summary of consultation responses received via a recent Survey Monkey consultation exercise to support the current review of policing in South Armagh being carried out by the Police Service of Northern Ireland. In August 2020, the PCSP issued a survey link to a number of local community organisations and Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinators.

22 unique responses were received during the period 9 August – 21 September 2020.

Question 1: What is your experience of your local police service?

Mostly good. Significant progress has been made in recent years; police are an accepted presence in the community.

We have never had a bad experience with police in our area, they respond quickly when needed and have given us mobile numbers so that we can call them directly.

Excellent - always willing to engage at a local level. This has really increased as a result of our Neighbourhood Watch scheme. The PSNI are much more welcome in our village and Stevie and Mark have helped us with some crime prevention information for elderly residents.

Very helpful when we have contacted them.

I have had no personal need of the police service.

Very good and effective.

Local police in the Newtownhamilton area seem to want an “easy life”. Response times are unsatisfactory. Police seem to listen to our community’s concerns but do not follow up on them. Confidence in policing is low in Newtownhamilton.

This is my experience - I went to St. Joe’s in Crossmaglen and in 2016 we took part in a cross-community project with a few other schools. The PSNI came to some of the sessions - I was in a bad place at the time, in with a bad crowd but tempted by what I was being offered (money, cars) to get involved in paramilitary stuff. I was depressed, lonely and was letting things get on top of me - I wanted to end my life, and had already decided how, where and when I would do this. That day I had gone to school with the rope in my bag, I didn’t plan to go home. The Police there that day-Stevie and Des (I’ll never forget their names) - talked to us about a heap of things but it was the talk about making good choices, and the fall out from making bad decisions that I remember. They spent a long time afterwards talking

Appendix E: PCSP Survey Summary 01/10/2020

to us, answering our questions and just listening to us. They were just sound. I left feeling more positive than I had in a long time and knew that help was out there if I wanted it. I looked for help that weekend-I would never had done this if I hadn't heard those boys talk to us that day. It changed my life-and saved my life too. I am sure of that. I owe them everything. Did I think I would say that coming from Crossmaglen and growing up thinking the Police were the enemy - never. But I'm here - happy with my life - because of them.

As a member of a residents group I have had quite a lot of contact with the police, I also am a school crossing warden and have had a lot of contact with police in that capacity as well as personally having had to call on police. I have always found them helpful, friendly and professional.

Reasonably good.

In recent times the PSNI have been much more visible in South Armagh and this is very welcome. They have been approachable, friendly and keen to help. Stevie and Mark play a vital role in engaging with local communities and have helped build trust and confidence in policing across the area. This is very important.

Excellent, always willing to engage and support our Neighbourhood Watch work. The public meeting in Meigh last year was one of the most positive community events we have ever had in our village. I felt proud that night to say that I was working with the police and the PCSP to help make our village safer.

Very good, I used to feel nervous when I first became a Neighbourhood Watch Co-Ordinator but now I am used to dealing with the police. They have been very approachable and always willing to help people in our area. Some of them have become very familiar faces to us and we missed seeing them during lockdown.

Question 2: What should police be focusing on? What is a priority for your community?

Rural crime, property theft, cattle rustling, speeding, boy racers in Killeen on a weekly basis, overcrowding in some bars. Newcomer families from other countries need support from police and the community.

More engagement with young people - in schools, youth groups. Anywhere that relationships can be developed.

Appendix E: PCSP Survey Summary 01/10/2020

Burglaries, speeding motorists, bad parking at Meigh crossroads, adherence to Covid regulations.

Parking at crossroads in Meigh, over-crowding in Murphy's pub, underage drinking and taking of drugs in Murphy's pub. Fights in village after pub closes. Speeding in the village.

In the last year it has been burglary, especially around Christmas. The burglaries were occurring daily. Preventing these should be a priority for everyone.

We are adversely affected by the loud car brigade who use local roads as a racetrack at weekends.

Police should be focusing on Community Policing, Stephen Simpson and Mark McGarrity make great efforts with community policing. Police could be on more foot patrols around the town- engaging with residents, they could also use their bicycles in town.

Speeding cars, untaxed and unroadworthy cars, anti-social behaviour are all priority issues in our local community.

Drugs use by organised crime syndicates.

Priorities include rural crime in many forms - theft of machines etc., burglaries in rural crimes, young drivers doing 'doughnuts' on the old Dublin Road in Killeen. Road safety in general; tackling the ever-increasing use of drugs and alcohol.

Speeding, drugs, gangs fleeing across the border too quickly. More visible co-operation with the Gardai needed.

Helping older people to feel safe in their homes, the home safety packs last year were brilliant. It would be great to see these given out again.

Cross border gangs who are involved in crime need to be stopped. They preyed on older people in our area last Winter and this left them feeling scared and vulnerable. The safety packs given out were a great help.

Domestic violence is a concern for me - I'm not sure how we can get people to report this more. It is still a taboo subject in my area. It would be great if something local could be done to help people speak up and look for help.

Appendix E: PCSP Survey Summary 01/10/2020

Question 3: What do we do well in your community?

Good engagement with local residents. Events in the community centre with the PCSP have been useful.

People are more accepting of the PSNI now - only made possible through serious hard work by local officers.

Engagement is excellent. Local relationships with the PSNI have never been better - extra foot patrols would be good but there is obviously a big area to cover.

Respond to calls and suspicious activity, brilliant follow up and feedback afterwards.

They have responded quickly to robberies in the past.

Low key policing works well in my area.

The PSNI engage with the young people at youth group occasionally, however this is not enough. PSNI recently carried out a speed awareness campaign at St Michael's PS which has to be commended.

As well as can be expected. Too few police on the ground.

Nothing.

Engagement work is excellent - while these might seem like 'set pieces' of engagement to the untrained eye work like this with local schools and youth groups etc. takes many months (if not years) to develop. It would have been unheard of a couple of years ago for uniformed officers to go into schools or business premises in South Armagh - this is now the norm and that is to the absolute credit of those officers who have worked so hard to achieve this. We have also engaged with the local PCSP and this has also been excellent.

Response is good, residents feel reassured by seeing a police presence in the community.

Stevie and Mark do a great job - neighbourhood policing can't be an easy job, building trust and getting to know communities previously beyond the immediate reach of the PSNI. These policemen have worked hard to make these links and connections as did others who worked in the area in the past.

Police are working well with local residents and communities - I like seeing them out and about. It is great to walk into a local coffee shop or restaurant and see them there, just having a cup of coffee and chatting to local people. This is how it should be - we will trust them more if we know them. This should be encouraged more.

Appendix E: PCSP Survey Summary 01/10/2020

Good attention to representation on committees dealing with older people (for example the local Older Persons Forum) and frequently attending OPF when requested. Dealing quickly with issues brought forward by OPF – e.g.-101 system re-recorded to ensure older people could hear and follow instruction.

Meeting with older people in their community groups on matters concerning safety in home and community - specific officers assigned to and known by communities so that appropriate relationships can be established. This helps build trust and confidence - older people are reassured by seeing familiar faces.

Question 4: What do we not do well in your community?

Police need to be more visible, more foot patrols in local towns and villages.

Response times could be better I think.

I can't think of anything, we are grateful for all the good work which has been done.

Need to build up more trust in community, be seen patrolling more and deal with issues highlighted above. Also to stop dealing with only Councillors, people want to see you working for the community not them.

They are invisible. Perhaps this is due to historical antagonism in the South Armagh area.

Nothing.

Response times, engaging with Bulgarian members of the community. The community feels that members of the Bulgarian community are able to do what they want and Police do not challenge them. E.g. - no tax on vehicles. littering, driving cars with no seatbelts, allowing children to sit on knees. The community of Newtownhamilton have little confidence in the PSNI as they do not see a change when crime is reported and when COVID-19 restrictions were in place we believe the PSNI failed to act in a timely manner to ensure groups were not meeting on the street. Response times are very poor in this area even though the police station is in the centre of the town. Often people feel they're being a nuisance contacting the PSNI. We are sick of the PSNI trying to educate people in Newtown, namely Bulgarian people, they need to be issued with fines or penalties in accordance with the law. A PSNI officer told us before "the honeymoon period is over." The honeymoon period is continuing.

Appendix E: PCSP Survey Summary 01/10/2020

Our community (Newtownhamilton) has been inundated with foreign national residents who are driving round the town untaxed not MOTd and at terrible speeds. Many reports have been made to police who don't seem to act upon them. Also the new playpark has become a hang out for older teenagers and young men in their 20s who urinate down there in front of young children also reported. Drug dealing openly goes on also reported but never any action taken.

Deal with anti-social behaviour.

More speed checks needed. More visible on street presence in beat patrols.

Response times to rural areas need to be improved.

More evidence of cross-border work with AGS (An Garda Siochana) would be useful. As a border village we would have more confidence in policing if we understood more about how police on both sides of the border work with each other.

We need to get the speed trailer out more - this gets people thinking about their speed. The new flashing signs are brilliant but we need more of them.

Question 5: What do we need to do to improve trust and confidence in policing in your community?

More visibility. More local engagement meetings with updates on outcomes of incidents which have been reported. We see a lot of activity sometimes but don't know the outcome of any investigation. Communication should be a two-way process and will build more trust.

Keep engaging, be visible, be a real and consistent presence in local communities.

Keep doing what you are doing! Engagement, engagement, engagement!! This builds trust, confidence and respect. Maybe other villages - Forkhill for example - would benefit from a dedicated focus?

Show a presence and respond effectively when requested.

Maintain good policing standards and response times.

More patrols and criminals brought to court, more vehicle checkpoints to seize untaxed cars on the road around Newtownhamilton. More Community Policing eg: walking around local housing estates, calling down to the new playpark to ensure ASB behaviour is not taking place. A more visible presence in our town. Not the presence we see each day of police coming and going from the town at high speeds.

Appendix E: PCSP Survey Summary 01/10/2020

Some of the above issues really need to be addressed (re: Newtownhamilton). Police need to be more visible on the street at appropriate times not for example walking through at 10am when the drug dealers and antisocial people are still in bed asleep. The speed trailer appears in the morning when nobody is about but the time when the speeding goes on is evening time as well. The police need to take action about all the cars not roadworthy or taxed and work with DVLA on this as some cars are untaxed for more than 2 years!!!!!!

More regular seminars with the community.

Recognise the excellent work of some of the officers already working in the area and acknowledge the progress that has been made. More patrols in local areas - foot patrols in Crossmaglen maybe? But - don't try to fix what isn't broken! The engagement work which is taking place at the minute needs to continue - it has built a solid foundation for future work of this type and should be protected.

Develop local structures for engagement and monitoring - involve local people and communities (where they can be involved) in policing - make this a real community issue. The PCSP may have a role in this but its remit is already vast - but there is space for local input as well.

More police on the streets in our village would be good - work with local people to develop greater confidence so that this can be done safely.

More public events with the community (once Covid is over). Sometimes people don't like the thought of going to police stations to report things or look for advice - talking to police in our community centre means that people can feel relaxed and comfortable. We need to see more of this.

Increased social media coverage - it is great when you see a local focus on your area.

More evidence of having a presence in the area, patrolling particularly where there is a likelihood of drug dealing and other criminal activity. Also, to be seen to deal with those who do not take Covid 19 seriously; house calls to reassure and provide advice to older people on safety in their community (although this may not be practical given the reduction in numbers of police officers). Every household should receive up to date information on community policing in their area (a newsletter would be good - older members of our community still like things in print).

Appendix E: PCSP Survey Summary 01/10/2020

Question 6: How responsive are we when you or members of your community ask for help or assistance?

Can vary.

Can vary - sometimes good, sometimes slow.

Always very responsive.

Excellent.

Seem to be responsive.

As expected.

Not very responsive, a recent incident took place and 999 was called. Firstly a 101 call was made, then as the incident unfolded further a 999 call was made. No response to the 999 call at all. The person who rang 101 received a phone call back several hours later. Unacceptable.

Usually when police are called we could wait anything from 45 mins to 2 hours for a response and usually whoever is causing the trouble has long gone.

Happy with any response.

Depends on the type of response - if we ask for assistance with our Neighbourhood Watch Scheme then this is sorted very quickly. We are delighted with the signage in our area and the feedback from local

residents. But when we ask for an update on investigations into local crimes information this is not always given. Maybe this is because of confidentiality but it would be good to be told sometimes that progress is being made.

Very good, we have had no issues in our community with response times or the quality of response provided.

In our area this has varied, sometimes very quick but in other cases it has taken longer. Maybe more officers are needed for the area to improve response times?

Always very good, no complaints.

Question 7: What barriers, if any, are there for your community to engage with or access policing?

A lot of barriers have been removed but there is still a legacy in the area.

Some of the older generations still hold a hard line on some things.

It would be great if the police stations were more welcoming to the public - they are an intimidating feature for local people and a reminder of a past which we have moved on from.

Network coverage is desperate in Meigh, sometimes we can't ring for help and have to ring 999 to Southern guards which takes ages to get through. Call agents

Appendix E: PCSP Survey Summary 01/10/2020

when you do get through are so unhelpful and rude, I have already discussed this with local police and a lot of people around here are now refusing to ring through. More work needs to be done with the call centre.

Police seem to be wary of the entire South Armagh area for historical reasons, and understandably so. The anger used to be high, but that is no longer the case (for the most part).

None.

The biggest barrier to access policing in our community is the heavily fortified barracks. Many people buzz outside the barracks but do not gain access. It is not a welcoming building.

None at all - our community does not hesitate to call police if needed.

Police are still not accepted everywhere.

This is improving. Local events with the PCSP have really helped to break barriers and normalise engagement. It is brilliant to see officers out in community centres, cattle markets and youth clubs etc., just chatting and taking the time to get to know local people. Events like this make them feel like 'our police' - I never thought this would be possible in my lifetime.

Some increased social media coverage on the area would be great.

Some hostility still exists in a couple of areas. The stations in Newtownhamilton and Crossmaglen are not welcoming to the community. There should be more community use of these where and when possible - open them up and let people see behind the facade.

People need to feel confident when dealing with the police - as a NHW Co-Ordinator I have tried to encourage this but some people still feel uncomfortable. The Neighbourhood Watch events with other schemes are great as police are there and we can have a chat with them. I am looking forward to these happening again.

Question 8: What are your views on the police stations in Newtownhamilton and Crossmaglen?

They are a reminder of the past.

They are a reminder of the past - they need integrated into the community better.

As above answer! Is it possible to organise a visit of these for local young people?

I only deal with Newtownhamilton police, never been to station. The team are excellent.

They are too large. They are an echo of an earlier and much more dangerous time.

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There should be no no-go areas in Northern Ireland.

The police station in Newtownhamilton is a heavily fortified barracks which takes up a large part of our town centre, the station is unwelcoming, distasteful and not maintained. Currently there are weeds growing out of the spouting. It is not welcoming for someone to report a crime and more times people cannot gain access. Large bollards exist outside of the station also blocking the street and making it difficult for people to access the PSNI Station. It needs to be more welcoming to reflect community policing.

I feel we need local police as it means we should get faster response times.

I can see why they are located close to the border but for my particular area we would get probably a quicker response from Newry.

The Crossmaglen station should be given back to the community. Is there a need for two stations so close to each other?

I have never been to any of the stations as the officers have been able to come out to our community to deal with local issues. They

seem out of place now that we have moved to a more normalised approach to policing in the area.

There is a need to keep police stations to make sure that response times are not affected. I know some local people who would like to see inside and find out more about how the work of the police takes place.

They are needed but the external facades could be repurposed to look less intimidating. Murals or art work on the exterior walls (designed by local school children or youth clubs maybe?) would be brilliant.

They are intimidating buildings but are probably needed so that police stay safe.

Question 9: As a resident of a border community what would help you to feel safer in relation to cross border crime?

Joint cross border events with the Garda and the PSNI. Communities should be able to contact police from either North or South if it is an emergency.

Cross-border events would be good and useful.

It would be good to get regular

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updates on the outcome of joint PSNI/Garda initiatives. Joint Neighbourhood Watch / Community alert meetings would be excellent.

That communication between the north and south is improved and that more is done to show people that this is happening.

A casual police presence now and again, so that those considering crime would have reason to think that their actions will not inevitably go unseen.

More information on co-operation between the PSNI and An Garda Siochana.

Increased patrols and further cross border communication.

Cross border crime has never been an issue for me as I know Guards and PSNI work together on this

A bit more awareness of cross border liaison and what they get right or wrong.

More evidence of close co-operation with the Gardai. Shared learning, development and practice. Cross-border Neighbourhood Watch events.

I would like to know how the PSNI and AGS work together on a

practical basis. How is information shared and used? Are there regular meetings to share information? We don't need to know about the sensitivities of confidential information, just some reassurance that there is regular communication.

Joint text messaging / social media updates from police on both sides of the border.

A co-ordinated approach to some community safety issues would be great – burglaries, dangerous driving to start with perhaps.

Cross-border community meetings would be great – we have talked to local Councillors in Crossmaglen who think that the PCSP could help with this. It would be good to have contact numbers for Councillors and others just across the border. Crime doesn't stop at the border – why should the communication between people and communities?

Question 10: Please provide any other comments or suggestions which might be relevant.

None.

Keep up the good work, and thank you.

Please keep up the good work - it is so appreciated within our

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community. Times have changed - we all should be very proud of what has been achieved and how far we have come.

The teams are doing great and have improved confidence for this area, however they need to start showing that they will be in the area for a while and are willing to get stuck in with the issues highlighted above. Otherwise thank you and keep up the great work.

The police contact in the area has been a positive step in the last year in connection with Neighbourhood Watch. It was handled with a high level of professionalism and sensitivity.

Communication is key.

It is very frustrating to see our town go so badly downhill (refers to Newtownhamilton) and police not doing anything as they want to keep relations good. This should not be a factor when upholding the law. Everyone who lives here regarding nationality should be subject to the same law and the same treatment but this is not happening. Local people must obey the law but foreign nationals and travellers can break the law with no consequences.

It is too wide an area to police - if we could get more neighbourhood policing this may improve working relationships.

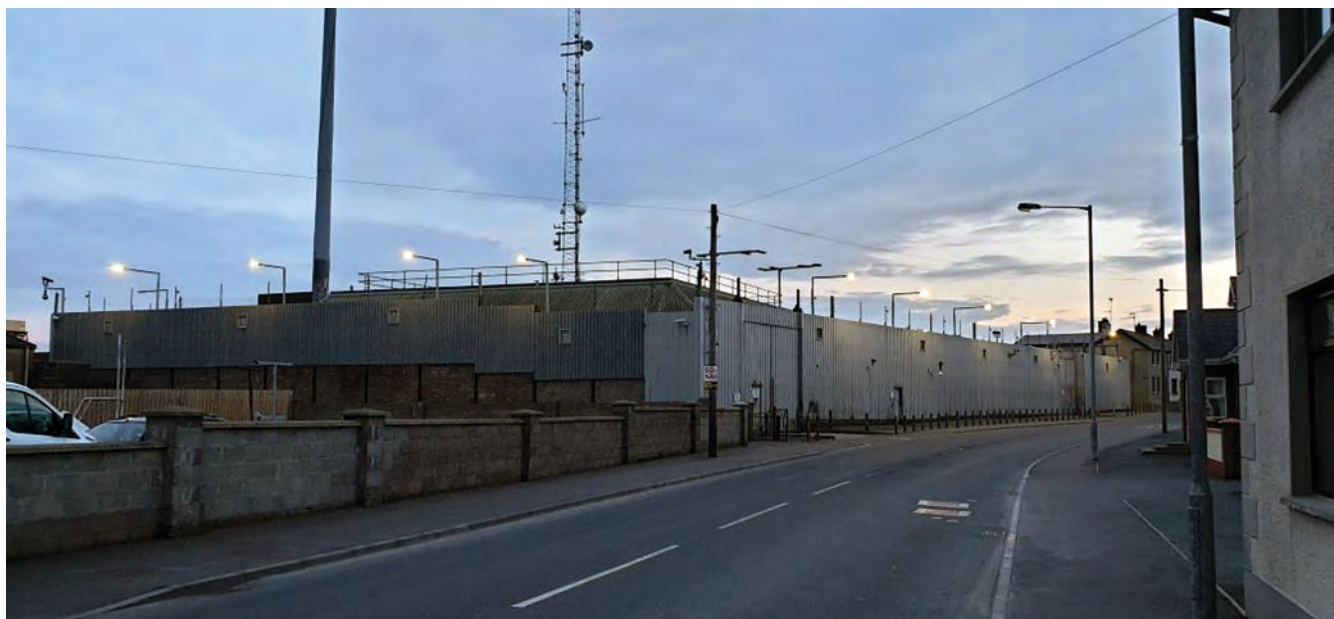
This review is an excellent idea - please make the findings public.

Thank you for all your work.

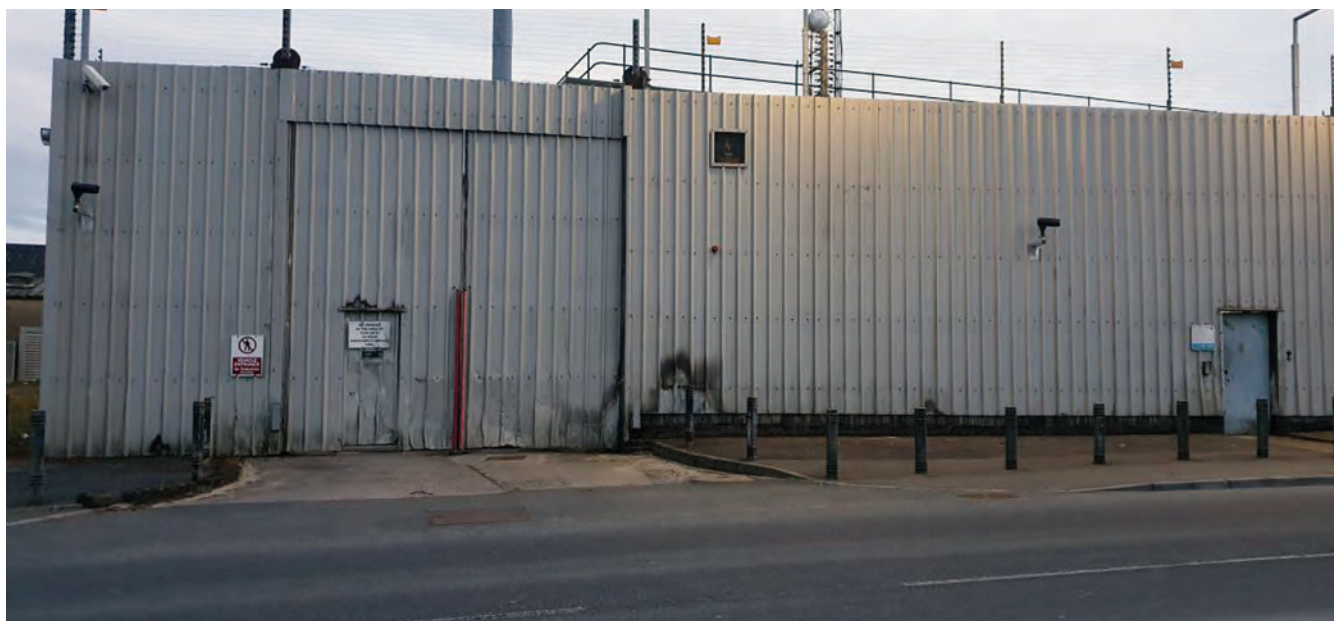
Thank you, you are making our communities safer places to work and live in.

Communication is key to trust and confidence. We need to move on from what happened at Christmas when the Chief Constable was in Crossmaglen. This was ill-judged and a mistake, but the priority needs to be on moving forward not back.

Appendix G: Photographs Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton Police Stations, March 2020



1. Crossmaglen Station view from the Square



2. Crossmaglen Station front façade – police vehicle and public pedestrian entrances

Appendix G: Photographs Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton Police Stations, March 2020

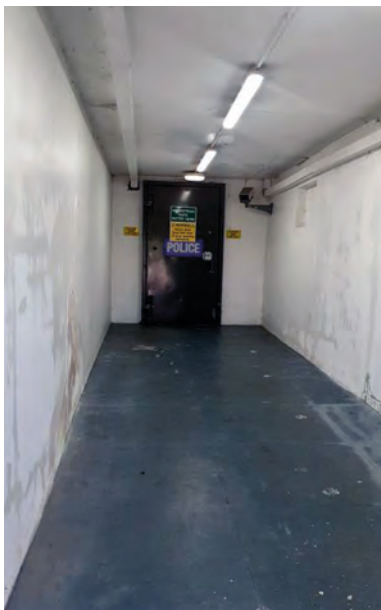


3. Crossmaglen Station front façade – public pedestrian entrance



4. Crossmaglen Station front public entrance door and signage

Appendix G: Photographs Crossmaglen and Newtownhamilton Police Stations, March 2020



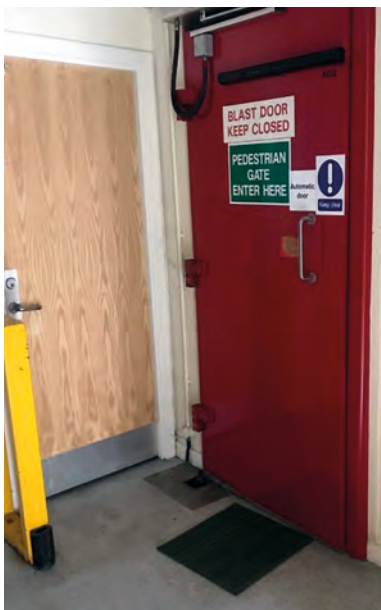
5. Crossmaglen Station interior public access to Enquiry Office



6. Crossmaglen Station Interior officer entrance to station



7. Newtownhamilton Station public main building entrance



8. Newtownhamilton Station public main building entrance from inside



9. Newtownhamilton Station street access view



10. Newtownhamilton Station main officer entrance

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