

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS & PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 MAY 2010 AT 10:00AM IN THE RAMADA DA VINCI HOTEL, DERRY/LONDONDERRY

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Mr Basil McCrea (Chairperson)
Ms Mary McKee (Vice Chairperson)
Ms Martina Anderson
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
Mr Suneil Sharma

PSNI REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:

- (2) Chief Superintendent Stephen Martin,
District Commander 'G' District
- (2) One PSNI Representative

REPRESENTATIVES OF FOYLE'S WOMEN'S AID IN ATTENDANCE:

- (1) Ms Marie Brown
- (1) Ms Eleanor McGuckin

REPRESENTATIVES OF NSPCC IN ATTENDANCE:

- (1) Ms Margaret Gallagher

DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP REPRESENTATIVES IN ATTENDANCE:

- (2) Mr Joe Millar, Chair, Derry DPP
- (2) Ms Cathy Nelis, Vice Chair Derry DPP
- (2) Mr Dermot Harrigan, Manager Derry DPP
- (2) Mr Jim Campbell, Chair Magherafelt DPP
- (2) Mr Michael McCrory, Manager Magerafelt
DPP
- (2) Mr James Emery, Chair, Strabane DPP
- (2) Mr Jeff Barr, Vice Chair Strabane DPP
- (2) Ms Vanessa Russell, Manager Strabane
DPP
- (2) Ms Linda McKee, Manager Limavady DPP

OTHER REPRESENTATIVE GROUPS IN ATTENDANCE:

- (2) Representatives from Republican/Nationalist
Groups and Loyalist/Unionist Groups

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISOR IN ATTENDANCE:

Ms Alyson Kilpatrick

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Peter Gilleece, Director of Policy
3 Board Officials

- (1) **Item number 5 only**
- (2) **Item number 6 only**

1. APOLOGIES, ETC

Apologies were received on behalf of Mr Gearóid Ó hEára and Mr Peter Weir. NOTED.

No conflicts of interest arising from the agenda were declared by Members.

**2. MINUTES OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
COMMITTEE MEETINGS**

**2.1 Minutes Of the Human Rights And Professional Standards Committee Meeting
Held On 23 March 2010**

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 23 March 2010.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the draft minutes of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee meeting held on 23 March 2010 be agreed.

2.2 Minutes Of the Human Rights And Professional Standards Committee Meeting Held On 24 March 2010

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 24 March 2010.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the draft minutes of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee meeting held on 24 March 2010 be agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE HUMAN RIGHTS AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS COMMITTEE MEETINGS

3.1. Meeting of the Human Rights and Professional Committee Meeting Held on 24 March 2010

3.1.1 Treatment of Immigration Detainees in Custody (Item 3.1 of Minutes Refers)

At the Committee meeting on 24 March 2010, Members requested information on the meeting between Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee and the UK Border Agency (UKBA) held on 18 March 2010. They had also requested that officials write to

- UKBA regarding the Memorandum of Understanding between UKBA and PSNI;
- the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI) regarding oversight, and
- Lord Carlile with reference to communications with UKBA.

Copies of all correspondence had been included with Members papers.

3.1.2 Monitoring PSNI Professional Standards (Item 7 of Minutes Refers)

Officials had drafted questions to ask the Chief Constable at the April 2010 Board meeting on:-

- training of supervising officers;
- ownership of Professional Standards; and
- responsibility for the Strategic Oversight and Review of Professional Standards.

Members were provided with the responses to these questions. Officials advised the Committee that a paper was in the process of been drafted which would propose ways to address a number of key issues of concern to Members with respect to the issue of Professional Standards.

Following discussion, it was:-

AGREED:

That officials would bring the paper as discussed to a future meeting.

3.1.3 Briefing Paper on the Use of Social Media and On Line Communications (Item 9 of Minutes Refers)

The Committee considered a paper which provided an overview of the report on the next steps for the Board in the use of social media as a means of enhancing engagement with stakeholders. The Committee was presented with 2 proposals.

Proposal 'A' – To develop a comprehensive social media hub as a means of improving the Committee's engagement with stakeholders. This would include the use of social networking tools e.g. Face book, Twitter and LinkedIn.

Proposal 'B' – To consider opportunity for taking forward a pilot project.

Following discussion, it was:-

AGREED:

- to take forward pilot project on social media as means of engagement on forthcoming thematic reports.

3.1.4 Briefing Paper on the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (Item 4.1 of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that the Director of Policy had written to the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission (NIHRC) advising that Members agreed to provide individual responses to the consultation on a Bill of Rights for Northern Ireland. Members were advised of correspondence from the NIHRC and agreed that the Director of Policy should provide further response. NOTED.

3.2 Meeting of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee Held On 16 December 2009

3.2.1 Briefing Paper on Children and Young People Thematic Inquiry (Item 5 of Minutes Refers)

At its meeting in December 2009, it was agreed that Mr Sheridan, Co-operation Ireland would provide the Committee with an outline of Co-operation Ireland's proposals for a pilot project on the area of Children and Young People. A copy of the overview had been included with Members' papers. NOTED.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

4.1 Historical Enquiries Team Letter to British/Irish Rights Watch

The Committee considered a draft response to a letter from British/Irish Rights Watch in relation to concerns regarding staffing within the Historical Enquiries Team (HET).

It was:-

AGREED:

That clarity would be sought from OPONI before the NIPB reply is issued.

5. PSNI IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS ARISING FROM THE THEMATIC INQUIRY ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

The Chairperson welcomed Ms Margaret Gallagher, NSPCC and Ms Marie Brown and Ms Eleanor McGuckin from Women's Aid to the meeting.

Ms Brown advised the Committee about her role and work within Women's Aid and her working relationship with PSNI. She advised Members that her position as a DPP member had proved useful to her role within Woman's Aid.

Ms Gallagher spoke on the NSPCC Strategy around Traveller Children and Domestic Violence.

Mrs McGuckin advised the Committee about the work she had undertaken with Foyle's Womens aid.

Ms Brown and Ms Gallagher advised the Committee about a recent Women's Aid and NSPCC event which had been held in Parliament Buildings, Stormont. This had been

supported and attended by the Committee's Chairperson, Mr Basil McCrea and District Commander, Foyle, Chief Superintendent Stephen Martin.

Members discussed various issues regarding how PSNI deal with incidents of domestic abuse. Members sought further information as to whether there was a league table across districts showing numbers of incidents of domestic violence reported to PSNI. Members also sought clarification as to whether the practise of recording repeat offences of domestic abuse in a district was a policy in other districts.

The Committee's Chairperson brought to Members' attention a Women's Aid event which would take place on 11 June 2010 at Parliament Buildings, Stormont. He advised that he would be attending the event and extended the invite to other Members of the Committee.

Following discussion, it was:-

AGREED:

- to hold an ad hoc meeting, at Waterside Tower, of the HRPS Committee on the issue of domestic abuse.
- to obtain further information on the practice of recording repeat offences of domestic abuse across districts.
- to invite ACC Criminal Justice to the Women's Aid event at Stormont on 11 June 2010.

6. THEMATIC REVIEW OF PSNI USE OF STOP AND SEARCH POWERS

During this section of the meeting, stakeholders held discussions with the Committee on the Committee's ongoing Thematic Review of PSNI Use of Stop and Search Powers under Section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000.

Stakeholders represented at the meeting:-

- republican/nationalist community representatives;
- loyalist/unionist community representatives; and
- District Commander PSNI and District Policing Partnerships representatives from Derry/Londonderry, Limavady, Magherafelt and Strabane.

Republican/Nationalist Community Representatives

The Chairperson welcomed the representatives from the republican/nationalist community. The representatives began by discussing their experience on the use of Stop and Search within their community.

The representatives felt that any inappropriate use of the PSNI Stop and Search powers was counter productive within their community and expressed their view that its current use undermined attempts to establish Civic Policing.

They also discussed the issue of Tactical Support Groups, (TSG). The view was expressed that a single TSG exercise could undermine months of good community policing.

The Committee discussed the following issues with the representatives:-

- a link between the use of Stop and Search powers and the number of arrests;
- the need for PSNI's use of Stop and Search powers to be intelligence led;
- the need to differentiate between Section 44 and other Stop and Search powers;
- the issue of TSG, their approach to operations within Republican / Nationalist Communities and a possible gap in oversight in respect of TSGs.

Following discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for a useful exchange of views and advised that the Committee would reflect on their comments.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that the use of Stop and Search Powers, and the authorisations used to justify their use would be considered in depth in the Board's Human Rights Advisor's report;
- the Human Rights Advisor would clarify specific issues raised at the meeting when completing her Review of Stop and Search;
- the HRPS Committee would write to the Community Engagement Committee regarding community policing and the use of TSGs.

Loyalist/Unionist Community Representatives

The Chairperson welcomed the representatives from the loyalist/unionist community.

The representatives advised the Committee about ongoing youth work in Derry/Londonderry. Examples were given of Police Officers undertaking training in youth work and it was suggested more proactive work with the PSNI could be undertaken. Some participants acknowledged the fact that Stop and Search was more an issue with the republican/nationalist community than the loyalist /unionist community. However it was also acknowledged there was concern that the in appropriate use of Stop and Search powers could be exploited by dissident republicans for propaganda purposes.

The good work being undertaken within the Fountain Area was highlighted and specific support from individual offices praised. However criticism was directed at the PSNI where good initiatives are taken forward and when officers move on there are sidelined initiatives.

Most of the discussion centred around PSNI involvement with youth in Derry/Londonderry. Members were advised of a Children and Young People Sectoral Working Group within Derry. PSNI had recently been invited to become involved in this project.

It was suggested that the Police in Derry needed a strategy for dealing with the children and young people as well as a general communications strategy which is a major issue for the community.

Following discussion, the Chairperson thanked the representatives for their contribution.

The Chairperson gave his commitment to visit youth groups within the Fountain area of Derry/Londonderry.

It was:-

AGREED:

- That the Committee would write to the District Commander, Foyle, Chief Superintendent Stephen Martin suggesting PSNI become involved in the Children and Young People Sectoral Working Group within the city.
- That all stakeholder groups who attended today's meeting would be included in feed back on the review of Stop and Search

PSNI and DPPs

The Chairperson began by welcoming PSNI and DPP representatives to the meeting.

The PSNI and DPPs were advised of the review of Stop and Search by the Board's Human Rights Advisor and that a formal report would be produced by the Board in due course. The most recent Stop and Search statistics, currently produced on a quarterly basis, were discussed with the District Commander.

Chief Superintendent Martin began by highlighting that 'G' District had the highest level of Stop and Search within the 8 Districts given the severe threat within the area. He informed the Committee of increased dissident threats and felt that the use of Stop and Search was necessary and productive and that its use was intelligence based.

Members raised the following issues with Chief Superintendent Martin:-

- specific allegations around the perceived misuse of powers by Police;
- the perceived use of this power disproportionately within 'G' district;
- the fact that in appropriate use of Stop and Search powers may undermine the policing with the community agenda;
- Public relations issues which need to be addressed as a means of encouraging support from the Community;
- Differing strategies for the use of Stop and Search districts.

Following discussion, it was:-

AGREED:

Further information and clarification would be sought regarding the comparative use of Stop and Search powers across districts.

7. INFORMATION PAPERS

7.1 Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) Report: Northern Ireland Alternative – A Follow Up Review

NOTED.

7.2 Woods – v – Commissioner of Police for the Metropolis

NOTED.

Volume II Papers

Following a brief discussion on the Historic Enquiries Team (HET) and the Patricia Lundy report, it was:-

AGREED:

- the Committee would be provided with an update on the work of HET;
- the Director of Policy would write to Patricia Lundy requesting a progress report.

8. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

It was:-

AGREED:

That officials would draft questions to ask the Chief Constable on the following:-

- Training of TSG Personnel and their impact on community Policing;
- PSNI communications with Communities;
- Policing and working with Children and Young People;
- Comparative level of stops and searches in 'G' district ;

9. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

It was:-

AGREED:

That a news release would be issued regarding the issues raised at the meeting.

10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters arising.

11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed for Wednesday, 16 June at 9:30am in Waterside Tower, Belfast.

(Meeting closed 4:15pm).

Secretariat

May 2010

Chairperson