

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON FRIDAY, 23 OCTOBER 2009 AT 2:30PM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

- Mr Barry Gilligan (Chairman)
- Mr Brian Rea (Vice Chairman)
- (1) Mr Alex Attwood
- Mr Tom Buchanan
- Mr Leslie Cree
- Mr Alex Maskey
- Mr Basil McCrea
- Mr Gearóid Ó hEára
- Professor Sir Desmond Rea
- Mr Jimmy Spratt
- (1) Mr Peter Weir

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- (2) Mr Matt Baggott (Chief Constable)
- (2) Mrs Judith Gillespie (Deputy Chief Constable)
- (2) Mr Drew Harris (ACC Crime Operations)
- (2) Mr Duncan McCausland (Assistant Chief Constable Operational Support)
- (2) Mr David Best (Director of Finance & Support Services)
- (2) Mr Joe Stewart (Director of Human Resources)
- (2) Superintendent John McCaughan, Command Secretariat
- (2) 1 PSNI Personnel, Media & Public Relations

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr Adrian Donaldson (Chief Executive)
- Dr Debbie Donnelly (D/Chief Executive)
- Mr David Jackson (Director of Community Engagement)
- Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate Services)
- Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
- 3 Board Officials

- (1) Item number 2 to close
- (2) Item number 2 only

1. APOLOGIES, INTRODUCTION ETC

Apologies were received on behalf of Ms Martina Anderson, Ms Mary McKee, Mrs Rosaleen Moore, Mr Ian Paisley Jnr, Mr David Rose and Mr Trevor Ringland. NOTED.

The Chairman welcomed Members to the special meeting, which had been arranged at short notice. He referred to the recent media speculation around devolution talks and meetings between the First Minister and Deputy First Minister and the Prime Minister. The Chairman advised, that while the Board had not been privy to the negotiations, officials had provided detailed information on the additional pressures identified by the PSNI and the Board that were facing the policing budget. In addition, the Board's Chairman, Vice Chairman and senior officials had appeared before the Assembly and Executive Review Committee before the summer in relation to funding issues.

The Board considered a paper which outlined details contained in the devolution financial settlement from a Board and PSNI aspect.

The Chairman referred Members to a copy of a letter dated 21 October 2009 from the Prime Minister to the First and Deputy First Ministers. He also referred Members to additional correspondence between the Board and NIO in relation to clarification on a number of points. The Chairman highlighted a letter dated 23 October 2009, tabled at the meeting, which had been received from the Security Minister confirming that he had approved the request for PSNI to move to a flexible budget, which would not be tied to the total number of officers. NOTED.

The Chairman proposed and Members indicated their approval to the Board discussing the Prime Minister's letter in more detail with the Chief Constable and his team.

2. DEVOLUTION OF POLICING AND JUSTICE – FINANCIAL SETTLEMENT

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Constable and other PSNI representatives to the meeting.

The meeting considered the Prime Minister's letter of 21 October 2009 and discussed the key elements of the settlement. Further details of the discussion are included in the attached confidential appendix – Appendix 'A'.

Members sought and received further information from the PSNI representatives in relation to:-

- the current PSNI bid and potential bid for 2010/11 to meet exceptional security pressures relating to policing;
- the PSNI Capital budget and completion of the training college;
- PSNI access to disposal proceeds from the sale of former military bases, particularly in regard to funding potential Equal Pay Claims in respect of PSNI staff;
- the settlement regarding police pensions;
- the "long list" of potential pressures relating to policing, particularly 'policing the past' issues – the continuing provision of information to Coroners, the maintenance of the Historic Enquiries Team at its current level and costs associated with the destruction of DNA records;
- the reference to "Prior to Devolution the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and the Head of PSNI agreeing on how frontline policing is protected while ensuring the greatest efficiency" and the lack of reference to the involvement of the Policing Board;
- the anticipated pressures from hearing loss claims and the timescale for such claims being resolved.

The meeting discussed the content of a letter received by the Chairman from the Minister of State dated 23 October 2009, regarding police efficiency savings and budget flexibility. The Chairman referred to the confirmation given by the Minister that Government was content for the PSNI and the Board to have flexibility in managing the composition of the force and the use of resources and would not be bound to maintain the current force complement of 7,500 regular offices. The meeting also discussed the proposed target for efficiency savings required from the PSNI in relation to the Treasury target of £5b efficiency savings in 2010/11 across Government.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Constable and PSNI representatives for their contribution and they left the meeting.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

3.1 Follow Up Action

The Board:-

AGREED:

- that the Chairman should write to the First and Deputy First Ministers in relation to the issues of concern raised during the meeting;
- that further clarification should be sought on whether disposal proceeds would be used to cover potential Equal Pay Claims for PSNI staff;
- that all Members should be provided with details of the “long list” of potential policing pressures which was provided to the Assembly and Executive Review Committee;
- the Board should seek further clarification from NIO regarding whether any deductions would be made at the budget allocation stage if the number of regular officers was reduced.

3.2 News Release

Members discussed the content of a news release in respect of the meeting. Following discussion, the Board then considered a draft press release.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the draft press release should be issued.

Mr Basil McCrea asked that his opposition to the content of the third paragraph of the news release be recorded.

(Meeting closed at 4.45pm).

Secretariat

October 2009

Chairman