

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE POLICY, PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 28 JULY 2011 AT 2:00PM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

MEMBERS:

- (1) Mr Gearóid Ó hEára (Chairperson)
- Mr Brian Rea (Vice Chairperson)
- Mrs Anne Connolly
- Mr Jonathan Craig
- Mr Ryan Feeney
- Mr Ross Hussey
- Mr Gerry Kelly
- Mr Trevor Lunn
- Mr Robin Newton
- (2) Mrs Joan O'Hagan
- Mr Brian Rowntree

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Edgar Jardine, Interim Chief Executive
Mr David Jackson, Director of Community Engagement
Mr David Wilson, Director of Planning
Mr Peter Gilleece, Director of Policy
3 Board Officials

- (1) Item number 4.2 to close
- (2) Item number 4.3 to close

1. APOLOGIES, ETC

Apologies were received on behalf of Mr Stuart MacDonnell and Mr Conall McDevitt and Ms Debbie Watters. NOTED.

The Chairman asked Members to declare any conflicts of interest arising from the agenda. No conflicts of interest were declared.

2. MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY, PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETINGS

2.1 Meeting Held On 21 April 2011

NOTED.

2.2 Meeting Held On 29 April 2011

NOTED.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETINGS

3.1 Meeting Held On 21 April 2011

3.1.1 Appointment Of An Assistant Chief Constable (Item 3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Interim Chief Executive informed the Committee that HMIC, Mr Bernard Hogan-Howe who was scheduled to participate in the appointment process for Assistant Chief Constable, had been appointed as Interim Deputy Commissioner of the Metropolitan Police and as a consequence would not be available to assist the Board. An alternative had been identified and had been contacted to assist in the process. NOTED.

3.2 Meeting Held On 29 April 2011

3.2.1 Organisational Review Of The Board

The Interim Chief Executive advised there had been no further developments since he had updated the Board on 7 July 2011. NOTED.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

4.1 Engagements

The Chairperson highlighted the following engagement which he had undertaken on behalf of the Board:-

- PSNI Graduation Ceremony, Belfast – 15 July 2011.

4.2 Correspondence

The Chairperson highlighted the following correspondence which had been received/issued:-

- Letter from the Chairperson of the Board to the Chief Constable dated 29 June 2011 regarding communications between the new Board and the PSNI. The Chairperson advised Members that the letter had been included in the papers to inform discussion on the Programme of Work at item 7 and to assist in agreeing a date in scheduling a diary date for discussion with the Board.
- Invitation for 2 representatives from the Board to attend a consultation exercise – “Counter Terrorism: Protecting Our Nation From Security Threats” on Thursday, 8 September 2011 in London. The Chairperson of the Committee advised that the Chairperson of the Board had indicated that he wished to attend the event. The Chairperson of the Committee advised that if any other Member was interested in attending further details were available from Secretariat. Mr Hussey registered his interest.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the invitation should be circulated to all Board Members.

- A letter from the Home Secretary to all Chief Constables dated 22 July 2011 in relation to police integrity and public confidence, following the activities of certain elements in the media in illegally accessing personal information and the relationship between the media and the police.

The Chairperson reminded Members of specific reference in the PSNI Code of Ethics to dealings with the media, but suggested that given the complexity of the issue and public interest, that the Board might wish to enquire if PSNI would be engaging with the review by HMIC.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the Chairperson of the Board should formally write to the Chief Constable to enquire whether PSNI would be engaging with the HMIC Review.

4.3 Training And Development Programme And Skills Audit

The Chairperson advised the Committee that “onboard” training had been arranged for 31 August 2011 and highlighted this training as one of the essential elements. The Interim Chief Executive advised that a request would be made to all Members concerning a developing skills and training audit, along with the invitation to attend the “Onboard” training.

A number of Members advised that they would not be available on 31 August 2011.

It was:-

AGREED:

That “Onboard” training should be rescheduled to the afternoon of 2 September 2011.

Members discussed the provision of training to Board Members and the benefits of training provided by the Chairs Forum for the members of boards.

A Member referred to the issuing of material in electronic format. The Chairperson reminded the Committee that the Interim Chief Executive had, as part of the organisational review recommendations, been tasked to review the use of technology to gain efficiencies. The Interim Chief Executive advised that Terms of Reference for this matter were currently being developed.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

5.1 Correspondence

The Interim Chief Executive referred Members to a letter dated 3 May 2011 from T/ACC Operational Support concerning the security situation assessment in relation to Patten Recommendation 65. NOTED.

6. POLICING ARCHITECTURE

The Committee considered a paper in relation to a draft protocol on the Policing Architecture. Officials advised that in July 2010, the previous Committee had been briefed on the draft by the Head of Policing, Policy and Strategy Division in the Department of Justice (DOJ). The draft protocol set out the operating principles for the relationship between the DOJ, PSNI and the Board. Following the exchange of correspondence and further consideration, the draft had been refined. The Committee was advised that the previous Board had agreed that the draft protocol was satisfactory. The protocol remained in draft form at present.

A number of concerns relating to the current draft had been raised by PSNI in October 2010, the Committee noted a summary of the concerns raised. During discussion of the draft, Members emphasised the critical role of the document in ensuring that the roles and responsibilities of the relevant key stakeholders were defined as clearly as possible and that the role of the Board in holding the Chief Constable to account should

not be diminished. Members discussed the need for the Board to clarify its role and the role of the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Justice.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the Deputy Chief Constable should be invited to meet with the Committee to clarify the PSNI concerns and that all Board Members should be invited to attend.

7. REVIEW OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE INCLUDING PROGRAMME OF WORK AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Committee considered a discussion paper on the role of the Committee, its function and future direction and a Programme of Work and a Development Plan to the end of March 2012.

The Chairperson advised that he had met with the Board's Senior Management Team to consider the current role and responsibilities of the Committee and to assess any gaps that needed to be filled. The Chairperson referred Members to the responsibilities the Committee had in respect of PSNI; the Board; and functions where the Committee is delegated to act on behalf of the Board.

The Committee considered the internal and external aspects of policy, planning and performance work carried out by the Committee.

A Member enquired about the relationship between the Committee/Board and the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the process for formal liaison. Officials advised that while the Board could influence policy objectives via, for example through the Policing Plan and PCSPs, there was currently not a statutory role for the Board in the development of Government policy, which rested primarily with the DOJ.

Members discussed the draft Programme of Work and Development Plan 2011/12.

With regard to the issue of relationship building and collaborative working, it was:-

AGREED:

That the objective to develop a programme of engagement with key strategic organisations and individuals, including DOJ, should be further considered by officials and a more specific list of the strategic organisations and individuals drawn up.

Members discussed how the Board should monitor progress by PSNI against the Policing Plan and whether there was merit in establishing a Performance Committee.

The Chairperson of the Community Engagement Committee advised that it had asked officials to provide options for monitoring the wider issues associated with the Policing with the Community Programme and identifying specific themes and areas for more detailed examination.

The Chairperson suggested it would be useful to continue discussions that had taken place at the Board on 16 June 2011 in relation to the Board's future Programme of Work. To this end it was envisaged that the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board would meet with all Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons of Committees concerning their respective Committee work plans and that each Committee plan would be brought to Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee for consideration.

During discussion, reference was made to the PSNI Diversity Steering Group and whether reports from the Group should be brought to the Human Resources or Human Rights & Professional Standards Committee.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the Board should request the minutes of all future Diversity Steering Group meetings and that they should be circulated to all Board Members.

The Chairperson advised that the PSNI had issued a consultation document on the PSNI Disability Action Plan. A number of Members confirmed that the Plan was being consulted on.

The Committee discussed the principles associated with the Board participating in PSNI Programme Boards. Officials advised that the previous Board had considered the matter and had concluded that Members/Board officials could attend in an observer capacity only and should not participate in any decisions made by the Programme Boards, in order to maintain the integrity of the Board's holding to account role.

It was:-

AGREED:

- That the Board should request copies of all minutes and terms of reference of PSNI Programme Board meetings;
- That the minutes of all Programme Board meetings should be copied to all Members of the Board;
- That the Deputy Chief Constable should be invited to brief the Committee about the role of PSNI Programme Boards at the next Committee meeting;
- That all Members of the Board be invited to the PSNI briefing on Programme Boards.

8. LEADERSHIP GROUP

The Committee considered a paper in relation to the re-establishment of a Leadership Group, comprising Members of the Board, as a sub-group of Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee.

The Vice Chairperson described the background to the establishment of a Leadership Group in the previous Board. He advised that it provided an informal forum where Members, particularly political party representatives, could frankly discuss contentious issues and that it primarily dealt with crisis management.

Discussion on the following themes ensued:-

- Compliance with the existing governance structures should avoid any need for crisis management;
- The ongoing requirement for the Group;
- The avoidance of duplication of work between the Committee and the Leadership Group;
- The use of similar groups in other organisations;
- The usefulness of a mechanism to discuss contentious issues in the less formal setting of a sub-group, where minutes were not published;
- The need for transparency in conducting Board business;
- The delegated authority which could be given to the Leadership Group;
- The benefits of establishing a Leadership Group to consider contentious issues.

It was:-

RECOMMENDED:

- That the Board approve the establishment of a sub-group of Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee to form a Leadership Group comprising the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Committee, 1 Member from each political party and 2 independent Members;
- That the need for the Leadership Group be reviewed after 6 months.

9. ROLE OF THE COMMITTEE, COMMITTEE MEMBERS AND OFFICIALS

The Chairperson alluded to a recent Committee meeting and the working relationships between Board Members and officials who provided advice and support to Committees. He referred to the expectation of Members and officials regarding their respective roles. The Chairperson sought the views of Members on how working relationships could be maximised.

The Chairperson of the Committee to which the Chairperson of the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee had referred, advised that the working relationship between Committee Members and officials servicing that Committee had been professional and that both Members and officials had acted with integrity throughout the meeting.

Members discussed the governance issues associated with the view that Committees hold officials to account, the challenge role of Committees, and negative experiences between Board officials and Members prior to the appointment of the new Board.

10. 'CHANGE AND CHALLENGE' CONFERENCE: NOVEMBER 2011

The Committee considered a paper which provided further details of proposals to host a joint conference in November 2012 in partnership with PSNI and the University of Ulster.

Officials reminded Members that at the July 2011 Board meeting, it had been agreed that the Committee should consider the benefits of the Board being involved in the Steering Group and if there was benefit, whether the Board Chairperson and or Vice Chairperson should be nominated to the Steering Group panel.

Following discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED:

- That the Board should jointly host a conference with PSNI, in partnership with the University of Ulster;
- That the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board should represent NIPB on the conference Steering Group, supported by the Board's Communications Manager.

11. INFORMATION PAPERS

11.1 Organised Crime Task Force Annual Report And Threat Assessment 2011

11.2 Absence Statistics For NIPB 2010/2011

11.3 Freedom Of Information And Data Protection Act Requests for Information Received By The Northern Ireland Policing Board In the Period 1 April 2010 To 31 March 2011

11.4 PSNI Communications Strategy

11.5 Board's Communications Strategy

NOTED.

12. MATTERS TO BE RAISED WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING

There were no matters arising.

13. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

Members had a discussion about how the Board should convey its priorities and programme of work to the public. Members emphasised the need to improve community confidence in the police and to assist a general understanding of the Board's role and to publicise the Board's ongoing work.

Members discussed how the Board could best interact with the community, particularly in those areas where the relationship between police and the community was uneasy.

Members discussed when to communicate the Board's Twelve Month Programme of Work, when this was finalised, and how to build confidence in the Board.

It was:-

AGREED:

- That the Community Engagement Committee should give further consideration to future meetings in public targeting hard to reach communities;
- That the Community Engagement Committee's recommendations should be considered by the Board.

14. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters arising.

15. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was:-

AGREED:

That the Committee should meet in August 2011, on a date to be agreed
(subsequently agreed as 4 August 2011) to consider:-

- The draft protocol on the Policing Architecture;
- PSNI Programme Boards; and
- The public session of the Board meeting on 1 September 2011.

(Meeting closed 4:20pm).

Secretariat
July 2011

Chairperson