

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE POLICY, PLANNING & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 20 SEPTEMBER 2007 AT 2:00PM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson (Vice Chairman)

- (1) Mr Alex Maskey
- (2) Mr Basil McCrea
- (2) Mr Daithí McKay
- (3) Mrs Rosaleen Moore
- (4) Mr Gearóid Ó hEára
- Mr Brian Rea
- Mr Trevor Ringland

SECURITY SERVICE IN ATTENDANCE:

- (5) Director (NI)

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- (5) Mr Peter Sheridan (ACC Crime Operations)

HUMAN RIGHTS ADVISORS IN ATTENDANCE:

- (5) Mr Keir Starmer
- (5) Ms Jane Gordon

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
- (7) Mrs Debbie Donnelly (Deputy Chief Executive)
- (6) Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate Services)
- (2) Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
- (7) Mr Peter Gilleece (Director of Policy)
- (7) 4 Board Officials

- (1) Item number 2 and from 6.4 to close
- (2) Part item number 2, 6.4, 6.5 and from 8 to close
- (3) Item number 2 and from 5 to close
- (4) Item numbers 2 and 7
- (5) Item number 1 to 7, except 6.4 & 6.5
- (6) Item number 6.4 & 6.5 and item number 8 to close
- (7) Except item numbers 6.4 & 6.5

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Mr Barry Gilligan, Mrs Dolores Kelly, Mrs Mary McKee and Mr David Simpson. NOTED.

2. PRESENTATION BY PSNI AND SECURITY SERVICE REGARDING TRANSFER OF NATIONAL SECURITY

The Chairman welcomed Mr Peter Sheridan, ACC Crime Operations, the Director (NI) Security Service, and the Board's Human Rights Advisors to the meeting.

The Chairman reminded Members that some aspects and detail given by the representatives from PSNI and the Security Service during briefing should be treated as strictly confidential.

ACC Crime Operations updated Members on the threat and criminal activities of the main paramilitary groupings.

The representative from the Security Service outlined the nature of the international threat to the United Kingdom, including Northern Ireland.

Members discussed a number of confidential matters arising from the presentations with the representatives.

With regard to the transfer of national security, ACC Crime Operations reminded Members of the background to the transfer and the 5 key principles overarching the transfer. During the briefing, he highlighted/commented on:-

- responsibility for executive action on behalf of the Security Service would lie with PSNI;
- Board responsibilities with regard to PSNI officers would not be changed;
- the Office of the Police Ombudsman's (OPONI) powers would remain unchanged;
- Serious Crime Operations would be conducted within PSNI guidance;

- the general subject matter of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) that would underpin the MOU.

The representative from the Security Service outlined the status of the new headquarters that was being built in Northern Ireland.

The Board's Human Rights Advisors reminded Members of their brief from the Board to ensure that the transfer did not affect the compliance of the PSNI with the Human Rights Act 1998 or the Policing Board's ability to monitor such compliance. A paper outlining the Human Rights Advisors' views on progress to date was tabled at a meeting. With regard to this report, the Human Rights Advisors highlighted:-

- the open, business like and professional relationship which PSNI had adopted during their dealings;
- all the issues about which the Human Rights Advisors had raised concerns had been addressed to their satisfaction;
- the 5 key principles had been incorporated into the MOU;
- the Advisors were satisfied that the requirement that PSNI, working in liaison with the Security Service, would remain subject to all legislation, policy and procedures governing PSNI actions, along with continued accountability to the Chief Constable, the Board and OPONI.

Members discussed various aspects of the briefings given by ACC Crime Operations, the Security Service representative and the Human Rights Advisors. Issues discussed included:-

- the date when the MOUs could be shared with the Board;
- the accountability mechanism involving OPONI;
- the number of officers to be in liaison from PSNI to the Security Service;
- confirmation that the Board's Human Rights Advisors will have access to the SLAs.

The Chairman thanked ACC Crime Operations, the Director (NI) Security Service and the Human Rights Advisors for their contribution and they left the meeting.

3. MINUTES OF A CORPORATE POLICY, PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2007

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the previous meeting.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the draft minutes of the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee meeting held on 19 July 2007 should be agreed.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2007

4.1 Future Funding Of Historical Enquiries Team (Item 5.3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chief Executive confirmed that funding had been secured for the work of the Historical Enquiries Team in 2007/08. NOTED.

4.2 Devolution Of Policing And Justice Matters (Item 13.1 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chairman informed the Committee that the Board had been invited to an oral evidence session of the Assembly and Executive Review Committee on 2 October 2007. NOTED.

5. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

5.1 Engagements

The Chairman had undertaken the following engagements on behalf of the Board:-

- Police Federation Annual Conference – La Mon Hotel and Country Club – 12 September 2007 (the Chief Executive attended the conference on behalf of the Chairman).

NOTED.

5.2 Publications

The Chairman advised the Committee that the following publications had been placed in the library:-

- Healing through Remembrance Annual Report – 2006;
- Policing a Shared Future Strategy (this document was issued to all Board Members).

NOTED.

5.3 Correspondence

There were no matters arising.

5.4 News Releases

The Chairman drew the attention of Members to the following news releases which had been circulated to Members.

- New Victim and Crime Strategy Launch – NIO – 18 September 2007;
- Police failed Rosemary Nelson: Police Ombudsman – 19 September 2007. The Chairman informed the Committee that he had asked the Chief Executive to request a copy of the full OPONI report on the Nelson Report but understood that OPONI were not required to do so;
- ARA freezes estimated £2.7m in suspected drugs/fraud case – ARA – 19 September 2007.

NOTED.

5.5 Corporate Policy, Planning And Performance Committee Meeting – December 2007

The Chairman informed the Committee that he had a speaking engagement on behalf of the Board on the afternoon of 13 December 2007, which was on the same date as the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee meeting.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee meeting scheduled for 13 December 2007 should be brought forward to 9:30am and finish by 12:00 noon.

5.6 16th Report Of The Independent Monitoring Commission

The Chief Executive advised Members that copies of the 16th report of the Independent Monitoring Commission were being obtained for all Members and would be circulated as soon as possible.

The Chairman drew the attention of 2 issues of particular interest to the Board referred to in the report.

The report highlighted the work already undertaken to normalise the police estate but stated “in our view the pace of de-fortification needs to be increased” and that “more work was needed to ensure the estate was of the right size and configuration”. The Chairman invited the Resources and Improvement Committee to consider these points when it considers a “refresh” of the Estates Strategy.

In respect of patterns of patrolling, the report recognised the progress that PSNI had made and stated “that the requirements of the programme have been met”. NOTED.

5.7 PSNI Response To Questions Raised By Members Of The Board

The Chairman informed Members that he had spoken to the Chief Constable regarding the content of 2 letters issued by the PSNI in response to questions raised by Board Members and advised Members of the Chief Constable's response. NOTED.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

6.1 Board Representation At Political Party Conferences – Autumn 2007

The Chief Executive informed Members that the Board had received a circular from the Social Democratic and Labour Party inviting the Board to take a stand at its annual conference. The Chief Executive asked Members to consider the issue of the Board having a presence at political party conferences.

It was:-

RESOLVED:

That if the Board was invited to attend or take a stand at a forthcoming political party conference that it should do so.

6.2 Format Of Board Minutes

The Chief Executive advised that a paper was being prepared for a future meeting concerning the format of Board minutes. NOTED.

6.3 Questions To The Chief Constable

The Chief Executive informed Members that guidance on questions to the Chief Constable was being developed and would be included in the planned training session on 10 October 2007. NOTED.

6.4 Board Staffing Arrangements

A confidential note on this matter is attached at Appendix A.

6.5 Confidential Matters – Chief Officer

A confidential note on this matter is attached at Appendix A.

7. CONSULTATIVE GROUP ON THE PAST

The Committee considered a press release issued by the Consultative Group on the Past, inviting submissions and offering an opportunity to meet. The deadline for requests for a meeting was stated as 5 October 2007 and submissions were requested by 7 December 2007. NOTED.

The Committee considered the issue of the Board making a corporate response to the Consultative Group. Following discussion, it was:-

AGREED:

That a discussion paper should be drafted for the October 2007 Policing Board meeting to further consider the submission of a corporate response to the Consultative Group on the Past.

It was suggested that Members might meet informally to discuss the development of a corporate response.

8. RESEARCH SUPPORT FOR POLITICAL MEMBERS

The Committee considered a response from the NIO in respect of the Board's request for research support for Members representing political parties. The NIO stated that it was not persuaded to devise a new allowance for political parties and asked the Board to explore how Members' needs might be met from existing resources. The NIO also

indicated that no additional resources would be made available to the Board against the background of the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review settlement.

The Vice Chairman of the Committee informed Members that he had spoken to the Secretary of State about the matter and further explained the background to the Board's request.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the leaders of the 4 political parties within the Board should send a joint letter to the Secretary of State to encourage further discussion on the issue of research support for political Members of the Board.

9. ASSOCIATION OF POLICE AUTHORITIES – LEAD MEMBERS

The Committee considered a paper which provided information for Members on the Association of Police Authorities (APA) and sought the nomination of Lead Members to represent the Board at APA policy groups relevant to the work of the Committee.

Members noted that the previous Board had developed the concept of Lead Members to promote and represent views or policies of the Board in specific areas of work and that there were currently 2 APA policy groups which are relevant to the work of the Committee, i.e. the Performance Management Policy Group and the Strategic Policing Policy Group.

It was:-

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board should represent the Board at meetings of the APA Performance Management Policy Group and the APA Strategic Policing Policy Group.

10. POLICING BOARD LANGUAGES POLICY

The Committee considered a paper which gave information about the Board's revised (draft) policy relating to "carrying out the work of the Board in languages other than English", and sought approval for a Board protocol.

The Committee noted the main points contained in a draft response, approved by the Committee on 18 April 2007, to consultation papers on proposed Irish Language legislation. At that time, the Committee had also agreed that the Board's language policies, practices and procedures should be reviewed to ensure they met the statutory and other obligations associated with minority languages within Northern Ireland society.

Discussion centred around guidance issued by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL); funding for additional costs; catering for the variety of minority ethnic languages spoken in Northern Ireland; and the response of other government departments and agencies.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that further information should be provided on the protocols used by other government departments/agencies;
- legal advice should be taken on the statutory obligations of the Board regarding its language policies, practices and procedures;
- on receipt of the further information above, that the Board should consider a paper on the matter.

11. PUBLICATION OF PAPERS FOR BOARD MEETINGS ON THE BOARD WEBSITE

The Committee considered a paper regarding the publication of papers for Board meetings on the Board website.

Following discussion, it was:-

AGREED:

- to obtain information on the resource requirements associated with publishing Board papers on the website;
- that a further paper should be brought to the Committee regarding the publication of papers on the website.

12. PROGRAMME OF MEETINGS 2008

The Committee considered a paper which proposed a programme of Committee meeting dates during 2008.

It was:-

RESOLVED:

That the Committee should meet on the following dates in 2008:-

Thursday, 17 January
Thursday, 21 February
Thursday, 20 March
Thursday, 17 April
Thursday, 15 May
Thursday, 19 June
Thursday, 17 July

Thursday, 18 September

Thursday, 16 October

Thursday, 20 November

Thursday, 11 December

All meetings were scheduled to start at 2:00pm.

13. NORTHERN IRELAND AUDIT OFFICE (NIAO) REPORT ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report from the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) on the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy. Officials had written to the Chief Constable to seek information and the background to the report and to seek his initial views on the recommendations that related to PSNI. NOTED.

It was:-

AGREED:

That a further paper, highlighting the issues of particular concern within the remit of PSNI be brought to the next meeting of the Committee.

14. CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTION NORTHERN IRELAND (CJINI) FOLLOW-UP REVIEW REPORTS

The Committee considered the Follow-Up Review reports on the Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) Inspections of Forensic Science Northern Ireland and Scientific Support Services in the PSNI, which were published in December 2005.

It was:-

AGREED:

- To write to the Chief Constable for his views in relation to the follow-up review of Scientific Support Services in PSNI; and
- To write to CJINI outlining the Board's course of action.

15. POLICING PLAN PERFORMANCE MONITORING – CORE PROJECT

The Committee considered a paper which provided an update on the operation of the CORE project, against the target at Part 3 of the Policing Plan.

It was:-

AGREED:

To write to the PSNI to seek further details on the key elements of progress, including efficiency savings and expressing concern about the apparent lack of progress in the review of HQ staffing and structures.

16. INFORMATION PAPERS

16.1 Tribunal Cases

The Committee considered a paper which provided a summary of the nature of cases and the current position on a number of Fair Employment Tribunal cases in which the Policing Board was named as a Respondent. NOTED.

16.2 Policing Plan Performance Monitoring – Immigration And People Trafficking

The Committee noted an update on the progress against a target in Part 3 of the Policing Plan on Immigration and People Trafficking. NOTED.

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

There were no matters arising.

18. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

There were no matters arising.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

19.1 Community Engagement Committee Meeting With Community Representatives

The Chair of the Community Engagement Committee briefed Members on arrangements being made for a meeting of statutory agencies, including PSNI, and community representatives concerning community policing and related issues in Belfast.

The Chair of the Committee confirmed that when the date was finalised, all Members of the Board would be invited to attend. NOTED.

20. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was arranged for 17 October 2007 at 2:00pm in Waterside Tower, Belfast.

(Meeting closed 5:00pm).

Secretariat

September 2007

Chairman