

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE POLICY, PLANNING & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2008 AT 2:00PM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

- Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
- (1) Rt Hon Jeffrey Donaldson (Vice Chairman)
- Mr Barry Gilligan
- (2) Mrs Dolores Kelly
- (3) Mr Alex Maskey
- (4) Mr Basil McCrea
- (5) Mr Daithí McKay
- Ms Mary McKee
- Mr Brian Rea
- (6) Mr Trevor Ringland
- (7) Mr David Simpson

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
- Dr Debbie Donnelly (Deputy Chief Executive)
- Mr David Jackson (Director of Community Engagement)
- Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate Services)
- Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
- Mr Peter Gilleece (Director of Policy)
- 3 Board Officials

- (1) **Item number 3.4 to 9**
- (2) **Item number 1 to part item 8**
- (3) **Item number 1 to 10**
- (4) **Item number 3.2 to 9**
- (5) **Part item number 12 only**
- (6) **Item number 3.5 to close**
- (7) **Item number 1 to 6**

1. APOLOGIES, ETC

Apologies were received on behalf of Mrs Rosaleen Moore. NOTED.

2. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE POLICY, PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 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 13 December 2007 should be agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2007

3.1 Chief Officers' Issues (Item 3.2 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chief Executive advised that work was ongoing on the development of a policy paper regarding secondments and acting-up of officers at ACPO ranks. NOTED.

3.2 Research Support For Political Members (Item 3.3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chief Executive provided an overview of the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) 07 settlement and sought the Committee's views, in the light of the settlement, regarding the provision of finance from the Board's budget to provide research support for political Members.

It was:-

AGREED:

- in principle, that the Board should provide funding from its budget for research support for political Members;

- that officials should obtain further information regarding the detail of the CSR07 settlement and provide a paper for the Committee in due course covering funding and administration of a scheme.

3.3 Preparations For The Devolution Of Policing And Justice (Item 5.1 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chairman advised Members that this matter would be dealt with under item 12 of the agenda when an official would give a briefing on an overview of devolved Assembly and Scrutiny Committees. All Members of the Board had been invited to attend the briefing, scheduled to start at 3pm. NOTED.

3.4 Police Pay Award 2007 – Booth II Review (Item 5.3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chairman informed the Committee that a paper regarding the recommendations in Part II of the Booth review of police pay arrangements had been considered by the Human Resources Committee at its meeting on 10 January 2008. The pay award had been accepted by the Human Resources Committee and would be implemented effective from 1 December 2007. The PSNI had been informed accordingly. NOTED.

3.5 Policing Board Monitoring Of Outstanding Patten Recommendations (Item 7 Of Minutes Refers)

With regard to inviting an Independent Validator to validate the monitoring which the Board is undertaking of the outstanding Independent Commission on Policing (Patten) Report recommendations, an official updated Members about initial contacts with a potential Independent Validator. Each of the Board's Committees had been asked to provide an update on progress regarding their individual areas of responsibility. The Committee will be provided with a paper regarding the matter at a future date. NOTED.

3.6 CORE Project – District Command Unit Structure (Item 9 Of Minutes Refers)

The Deputy Chief Executive confirmed that, as agreed at the previous meeting, letters had been issued to the Chief Constable and relevant District Policing Partnerships.

The Chief Constable had indicated that he considered a roundtable discussion would be helpful and officials were working to finalise a suitable date. NOTED.

With regard to concerns which had been expressed by a delegation from Castlereagh DPP regarding the Policing Plan process, the Community Engagement Committee was due to consider the matter at its next meeting. The Chief Executive informed the Committee that he, along with the Member allocated to the DPP, was planning to attend a meeting of Castlereagh DPP at the end of January 2008. NOTED.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

4.1 Engagements

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

- Luncheon Club – Belfast Harlequins – 13 December 2007;
- Graduation Ceremony – University of Ulster, Coleraine and Magee Courses – 18 December 2007;
- Graduation Ceremony – University of Ulster, Jordanstown Campus – 20 December 2007;
- 999 Emergency Services Joint Charity of the Year Launch – 9 January 2008 (with the Chief Executive).

NOTED.

4.2 Publications

The following publication had been received:-

- Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders – Annual Report 2006 – 2007.

NOTED.

4.3 Correspondence

The Chairman informed Members he had received the following correspondence:-

- letter from the National Democratic Institute dated 30 November 2007 regarding visit of Iraqi Parliamentarians on 31 October 2007;
- letter from the Association of Police Authorities dated 18 December 2007 regarding your Chairman's participation in the APA Annual Conference on 28 – 29 November 2007;
- letter of thanks from Cardinal Sean Brady, dated 18 December 2007 regarding expression of congratulations upon his nomination to the College of Cardinals.

NOTED.

4.4 News Releases/Articles

- the Chairman informed the Committee that he had written to the Guardian newspaper on 18 December 2007 regarding an article published on 4 December 2007 concerning the recruitment of Catholic officers to the PSNI.

NOTED.

4.5 Change Of Date Of April 2008 Committee Meeting

It was:-

AGREED:

To change the date of the April 2008 Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee from 17 April to 16 April 2008, to facilitate the attendance of the Chairman and a number of Board Members at an event in London on 17 April 2008.

4.6 Terms Of Reference For Independent External Review – Omagh Bombing

The Chairman received indications from a number of Members that they planned to leave the meeting early, in view of this, item 13 regarding the Terms of Reference for an Independent External Review of the Omagh Bombing was taken under Chairman's Business.

The Chairman referred Members to a confidential letter, tabled at the meeting, which he had received from the Deputy Chief Constable regarding recommendations made by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland, in relation to the type of duties to be undertaken by 2 officers named in Mr Justice Weir's Judgement of 20 December 2007 in the case R – v – S Hoey. The Chairman also referred to reports in the media the previous evening regarding the matter. NOTED.

The Chairman informed Members that he had written to all families, on behalf of the Board, informing them of the decisions taken by the Board on 3 January 2008. He recorded appreciation for the assistance of Omagh District Council in forwarding correspondence. The meeting was informed by a Member that a group representing families of those bereaved by the Omagh bombing had requested a meeting with the Board concerning the Review.

Members discussed the most appropriate time, venue and format for a meeting involving the families and it was,

AGREED:

- that the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee should meet with the families and that all Board Members should be invited to attend;
- that the meeting should be arranged, if possible, before the February 2008 Board meeting;
- that the meeting should be held in the Omagh area;
- to defer finalising the Terms of Reference for the review until after the meeting with the Omagh families was held; and

- to seek legal advice regarding the drafting of Terms of Reference for the review.

4.7 Launch Of PSNI Code Of Ethics

The Chairman of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee reminded Members that the launch of the PSNI Code of Ethics was scheduled to take place on 6 February 2008. He highlighted a number of concerns relating to the conduct of officers that had been the subject of public debate in recent weeks. Members discussed a number of these issues.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that Members participating in the launch should be provided with an appropriate briefing by officials; and
- that Members should receive a summary of the PSNI policy regarding the suspension of police officers from duty.

4.8 Omagh – Fatal Fire

The Chairman informed the Committee that he and the Vice Chairman had received a confidential briefing from ACC Criminal Justice regarding police action subsequent to the fatal fire in Omagh involving the McElhill / McGovern family.

A Member referred to the review initiated by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) concerning the matter.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that the Board should write to ACC Criminal Justice to obtain further information regarding the remit of the DHSSPS review and the involvement of PSNI and the Board; and
- that ACC Criminal Justice should be invited to brief the Board in connection with the review at an early date.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

5.1 European Serious And Organised Crime Conference – 4 – 6 March 2008

The Chief Executive advised the Committee about a Serious and Organised Crime Conference arranged for Liverpool between 4 – 6 March 2008. He asked any Members interested in attending to contact the Secretariat. NOTED.

5.2 Study Visit For Board Members

The Chief Executive outlined proposed dates, venue and the general content for a proposed study visit for Members.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that officials should proceed with arrangements for a study visit for all Board Members to Edinburgh / Strathclyde on 26 – 27 February 2008;
- that the proposed content, including possible attendance at the Scottish Policing Performance Conference on 28 February 2008, should be further progressed by officials; and
- that a draft programme should be circulated to Members as soon as it is available.

5.3 Presentation To Mr Keir Starmer

The Chief Executive reminded Members that the Board's Human Rights Advisor, Mr Keir Starmer would shortly be completing his contract with the Board.

It was:-

AGREED:

That officials should make suitable arrangements for a presentation.

5.4 Washington 2008

In previous years, Members of the Board had been invited to the St Patrick's Day celebrations in the United States of America, and the Chief Executive asked Members to reflect on the representation, if any, that the Board should send to the upcoming St Patrick's Day celebrations and that the matter would be considered further at the next Board meeting. NOTED.

5.5 'Seeing Is Believing' Visits

The Deputy Chief Executive reminded Members that, in line with Board commitments in the 2007 / 2010 Annual Policing Plan, regarding the Neighbourhood Policing Model, arrangements were being made for visits by Members in Urban and Rural Regions. Details of the arrangements had been issued by the Director of Community Engagement and all Board Members were encouraged to support the visits. NOTED.

5.6 Community Engagement Meeting

Members were reminded that the Community Engagement Committee had hosted a special meeting in September 2007 with religious and community representatives to discuss community concerns and agency responses around the incidences of anti social behaviour. A follow-up meeting was planned for 22 January 2008 and all Members of the Board were invited to attend. NOTED.

5.7 DPP Appointment Panels

The Chief Executive emphasised the vital role of Members in the forthcoming appointment process in respect of independent members of District Policing Partnerships. While recognising the pressures on Board Members' time, he encouraged all Members to participate in the process and to return the appropriate paperwork. NOTED.

6. NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD 2nd DRAFT CORPORATE PLAN 2008 – 2011

The Committee considered a paper which provided a further draft of the Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011. Following consideration:-

It was:-

RECOMMENDED:

That the Board approve the 2nd Draft of the Corporate Plan 2008 – 2011.

7. NORTHERN IRELAND AFFAIRS COMMITTEE INQUIRY (NIAC) – POLICING AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Chairman reminded Members that the Committee had delegated authority from the Board to agree a response to the Northern Ireland Affairs Committee (NIAC) Inquiry into Policing and Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland.

The 2 specific areas of concern in the first phase of the Inquiry were set out as follows:-

1. *the financing and operating consequences for the PSNI of serving the various "historic enquiries" into past events in Northern Ireland;*

2. *the effect on the ability of the PSNI to bring accused persons to trial of provisions in the Public Enquiries Act 2005 and in other legislation requiring the police to divulge information which might identify a covert source.*

The Committee considered a draft response prepared by officials. Following discussion, it was:-

RESOLVED:

That the NIAC should be advised that “it is the view of the Northern Ireland Policing Board that the effectiveness and efficiency of the PSNI in preventing and detecting crime should not be compromised by dealing with the various commitments, as outlined above to historical enquiries. It is the responsibility of Government to ensure that the Police Service be provided with adequate funding to deal with “policing the past”.

It was clear from discussion that a consensus view could not be reached on the second specific area of concern of the Committee Inquiry. Members noted that political parties and individual Members could write to the Committee Inquiry to reflect their respective views.

8. OMNIBUS SURVEY QUESTIONS – APRIL 2008

The Committee considered a paper which set out draft questions to be included in the April 2008 Omnibus Survey. Following discussion, it was:-

AGREED:

- that officials should further reflect on the inclusion of a question or questions relating to neighbourhood policing;
- that with regard to draft question 11, officials should reflect on wording to include reference to response times.

A Member raised the issue of the validation of information gained from the survey and the independent role of NISRA was acknowledged. The need to draw on a range of sources of community feedback information was also discussed. Officials provided reassurance that the survey methodology was robust enough to be considered statistically valid and that no further validation was required.

9. NORTHERN IRELAND AUDIT OFFICE AND PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE REPORTS ON THE NORTHERN IRELAND ROAD SAFETY STRATEGY

The Committee considered information received from the Comptroller and Auditor General and ACC Operational Support respectively relating to the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO) and Public Accounts Committee reports on the Northern Ireland Road Safety Strategy published in September and November 2007 respectively. Reference to a further NIAO report on progress in tackling organised crime was noted.

It was:-

AGREED:

That the Committee should be briefed on the findings of the Northern Ireland Audit Office Report on the Progress in Tackling Organised Crime in Northern Ireland, referred to in the correspondence.

10. QUESTIONS AT BOARD MEETINGS

The Chief Executive reminded Members of Board discussions regarding the most effective use of the opportunity to question the Chief Constable at Board meetings and that each Committee was being asked to make recommendations to the Board. The Committee noted proposals to date made by the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee, the Human Resources Committee and Resources and Improvement Committee concerning questions at Board meetings.

It was:-

AGREED:

That a summary paper should be prepared for the next Board meeting.

11. FINAL DRAFT OF THE 2008-11 POLICING PLAN

The Chairman referred Members to the final draft of the Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2008-2011.

The Committee concentrated on Parts 2 and 3 of the Plan. The Chairman also referred to a letter that he had received from the Chief Constable, tabled at the meeting, regarding the development of Part 2 of the Plan and the PSNI response to a number of outstanding issues received from the Board in relation to the Plan.

It was:-

RESOLVED:

- target 4.1.1 – to increase the clearance rate by 5 percentage points;
- target 4.1.2 – to set 3 distinct targets in respect of clearance rates for sectarian , racist and homophobic crimes;
- target 4.3.1 – to set targets to increase the number of seizures and the value of assets seized under the Proceeds of Crime Act;
- target 9.3.1 and 9.3.2 – to increase the percentage target of custody cases processed within administrative time limits; and to increase the percentage of bail cases processed within administrative time limits;
- to give the Chairman delegated authority to ‘sign off’ on the 2008-2011 Policing Plan following a resolution of any outstanding issues.

12. BRIEFING ON OVERVIEW OF DEVOLVED ASSEMBLY AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

Members noted a background paper on the potential impact of the devolution of policing and justice for the Board and its work.

The Director of Policy gave a presentation to Members entitled, "Overview of the Devolved Assembly and Scrutiny Committees". A copy of the slides used in the presentation is attached at Appendix 'A'.

Following the presentation, Members discussed a number of implications of the Devolution of Policing and Justice for the Board's work. The consensus view of the Committee was that these were issues that should be considered again at a future date.

13. TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL REVIEW – OMAGH BOMBING INVESTIGATIONS

This matter was dealt with at item 4.6.

14. INFORMATION PAPERS

The following information papers were considered.

14.1 Introduction Of HR Connect Into The Policing Board

14.2 Chief Officers' Pay Claim

14.3 Police Ombudsman's Report - Development In Police Complaints – 7 Years On

NOTED.

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

There were no matters arising.

16. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

It was:-

AGREED:

To issue a news release regarding the Committee's decision to meet with the Omagh Bombing families.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters arising.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was agreed for 21 February 2008 at 2.00pm in Waterside Tower, Belfast.

(Meeting closed 4:25pm).

Secretariat

January 2008

Chairman