

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE 38th CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 18 NOVEMBER 2004 AT 10:00 AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

- Professor Desmond Rea (Chairman)
- Mr Denis Bradley (Vice-Chairman)
- (1) Mr Alex Attwood
- (1) Viscount Brookeborough
- (1) Mr Joe Byrne
- Mr Brian Dougherty
- (1) Mr Sam Foster
- (1) Mr Willie Hay
- (2) Mrs Pauline McCabe
- (3) Mr Eddie McGrady
- (4) Mrs Rosaleen Moore
- (1) Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
- (5) Mr Sammy Wilson

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- (6) Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
- (6) Director of Communications
- (6) Director of Community Affairs
- (6) Director of Corporate Services
- (6) Director of Planning
- (6) Director of Policy
- (6) Two Board Officials

- (1) Item 14 only
- (2) Item 5.4 to close
- (3) Item 3.2 to close
- (4) Item 3.12 to close
- (5) Item 3.16 to close
- (6) Except Item 4.1

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for non-attendance was received from Mr Cobain.

The Chairman welcomed Mr Dougherty and Mrs Moore to the meeting, as the newly appointed 'Floating Members' for the next year.

2. MINUTES OF THE 37TH CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 21 OCTOBER 2004

The minutes of the Corporate Policy Committee meeting held on 21 October 2004 were agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

3.1 District Policing Partnerships (Item 3.1 Of Minutes Refers)

3.1.1 Dungannon And South Tyrone DPP

The Committee noted that a meeting of the Board's appointment panel to select independent members for Dungannon and South Tyrone DPP had been arranged for 25 November 2004.

3.1.2 Community Safety Partnerships

The Committee noted that a Home Office White Paper dealing with community safety had recently been published. The Committee agreed that officials should consider the White Paper and advise the appropriate committee of any implications for community safety in Northern Ireland.

3.1.3 Order In Council

The Committee noted that the NIO were preparing an Order in Council recommending changes in the legislation to facilitate continuity of DPPs following the local government elections in 2005.

3.1.4 Threats Against DPPs

The Committee were updated about threats received by DPPs. The Committee agreed that the Chairman should write to an individual who had been the subject of a recent security incident.

3.2 Association Of Police Authorities (Item 3.2 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that the Chief Executive had written to the Association of Police Authorities (APA) to invite the Association to hold a meeting in Northern Ireland and had also suggested that a future APA Annual Conference could be held in the province.

3.3 HMIC Baseline Assessment Report – April 2004 (Item 3.4 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that Mr Ken Williams, HMIC had agreed to attend the December Corporate Policy Committee to deliver a presentation on his Baseline Assessment Report on PSNI. It was also noted that the Chief Constable had been invited to attend the presentation and to respond to the assessment. The Committee agreed that all Board Members could be invited to attend this part of the meeting.

3.4 Review Of Police Fund (Item 3.5 Of Minutes Refers)

This matter was dealt with under items 10 and 12.

3.5 Reception (Item 3.7 Of Minutes Refers)

The Director of Communications updated the Committee on arrangements for a Board reception for DPP members, custody visitors, independent observers and others on 1 December 2004.

3.6 Proposed Closure And Disposal Of Police Stations (Item 3.8 And Item 14 Of Minutes Refers)

This matter was considered under item 14.

3.7 Informal Meeting With Student Officers (Item 3.9 And Item 11 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that officials had written to PSNI concerning the review of student officer meetings. A response was awaited from PSNI.

3.8 Security Vetting Policy (Item 5.1 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive were due to discuss security vetting policy following the Committee meeting.

3.9 Conference On Night-Time Economy And Licensing Act (Item 5.3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that Mr Wilson had attended a Night-Time Economy and Licensing Act Conference on 9 November 2004 and would be providing a written report to all Committee Members on the key issues arising from the conference.

3.10 Northern Ireland Affairs Committee – Inquiry Into The Functions Of The Policing Board (Item 5.4 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that the Chairman, Vice-Chairman and Chief Executive were scheduled to give evidence to the Committee's Inquiry on 8 December 2004.

The Committee considered that it would be essential for the Board to give evidence separately from other parties.

3.11 Meetings With Journalists (Item 5.2 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that a number of meetings were being arranged with journalists over coming weeks and months to discuss the work of the Board during the last 3 years and its plans for the future.

3.12 Defining The Role Of The Board (Item 6 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chief Executive reminded Members that at the previous meeting it had been agreed that a Working Group should be established, comprising of the Board's Chairman and Vice-Chairman and one representative from each of the political parties represented on the Board, to prepare a paper which would seek to define the role of the Board within the policing architecture. To date, one political party had submitted the name of their representative and the first meeting of the Working Group would be arranged when the other political parties identified their respective representatives.

3.13 Business And Decision-Making Processes (Item 7 Of Minutes Refers)

This matter was considered under item 6.

3.14 Association Of Police Authorities (APA) Policy Groups And Networks (Item 8 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that officials were continuing to consider how best the Board should participate in the APA Plenary and policy groups, and its involvement with the networks of the APA. The Chief Executive advised that he was mindful of the time commitment involved in such participation and would consider the matter further, following a forthcoming meeting with other Clerks of Police Authorities in England and Wales and the annual conference of the Association of Police Authorities.

3.15 Staff Attitudes Survey (Item 9 Of Minutes Refers)

This matter was considered under item 8.

3.16 Registration Of Notifiable Memberships (Item 12.1 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee discussed the withdrawal of the Judicial Review of the notifiable memberships process scheduled for 11/12 November 2004.

The Committee noted that the matter was scheduled to be discussed at the next meeting of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

4.1 Chief Executive's Performance Appraisal (6 months)

All officials left the meeting for this item.

4.2 Publications

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

- HMIC Baseline Assessment of the National Crime Squad – July 2004
- Community Conflict – Causes and Action – November 2004

4.3 Engagements

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

- Dinner to mark the retirement of Sir Keith Povey, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary on 4 November 2004
- Royal Ulster Constabulary George Cross Senior Officers Club Dinner – Newforge – 5 November 2004
- Reception for the Police Service of Northern Ireland at the House of Commons – 16 November 2004

4.4 News Release

The Chairman highlighted the news release issued by the NIO announcing the de-specification of UDA/UFF on 12 November 2004.

4.5 Medal and Duty Payment For Part-Time Reserve Officers

The Committee noted proposals set out in a letter tabled at the meeting, from a Board Member seeking Board consideration of:-

- A medal to recognise the efforts of Part-Time Reserve Officers
- A duty payment to Part-Time Reserve Officers

The Committee agreed to defer consideration of this item until the next meeting.

4.6 Changes In NIO Structures

The Committee noted a number of changes at Senior Civil Service level in the Northern Ireland Office, which would take place by the end of November 2004.

4.7 Change Of Date Of Committee Meeting

The Committee agreed to change the date of the March 2005 Committee meeting from Wednesday, 16 March to Tuesday, 15 March 2005.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

5.1 Update On SR2004 And Gershon Review

The Chief Executive briefly updated the Committee concerning ongoing discussions with NIO and PSNI regarding the Spending Review 2004 (SR2004) and Gershon Review.

The Committee noted that a Government paper concerning the Review of Public Administration had been delayed following consultations with political parties and was now expected to be published in the New Year.

5.2 Draft Annual Policing Plan For 2005 – 2006

The Committee considered a draft Policing Plan for 2005 – 2006 which had been drawn up following the Joint Board / PSNI Strategy Day on 27 October 2004 and had taken account of the views of PSNI following their Strategy Planning Day on 10 / 11 November 2004. The Committee noted that the draft plan had moved away from 4 overarching aims to the “domains” approach adopted in policing plans for England and Wales.

The Committee considered the objectives, performance indicators and targets in each of the 5 proposed domains. Members suggested a number of amendments and officials undertook to give further consideration to the proposals and where appropriate, to include these in a revised draft to be circulated to PSNI and brought back to the Committee in December.

5.3 December Monitoring Round

The Committee noted that the December monitoring round was scheduled to be discussed at the next meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

5.4 Union Representation – PSNI Civilian Staff

The Committee noted that the Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA) had verbally requested the opportunity to attend future Board meetings in public on the same basis as the Police Federation and Superintendents Association. The Committee discussed the request and whether civilian staff were represented by more than one trade union.

The Committee agreed in principle to facilitate attendance of an officer of the Trade Union(s) representing civilian staff, subject to the Chief Executive obtaining confirmation that NIPSA would represent all the civilian staff trade unions.

6. BUSINESS AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES (REVISED PAPER)

The Chief Executive reminded Members of discussion at the previous Committee meeting regarding a range of inter-related issues within the business and decision-making processes of the Board, including the review of Standing Orders.

He advised that the revised paper and appendices had been updated to include the initial comments from the Committee and further drafting on a small number of points. The Committee considered the revised paper including the approach to gender neutral language. Following discussion it was agreed:-

- Standing Order 14(c) - to return to the wording of the first draft and amend it to take account of discussion so that questions from the public could be facilitated in an appropriate manner
- To amend Standing Orders 19, 24 and 25 as proposed in the paper
- That the amended standing orders be forwarded to the Crown Solicitor's Office for advice

The Committee considered a number of amendments to the Board's Code of Conduct. The Committee agreed a number of minor amendments to the Code of Conduct and to more substantive amendments to paragraphs 1, 24, 25 and 32.

The Committee considered and agreed papers setting out the role of Committees which had been updated and now included a clear statement of the delegated authority granted to each Committee.

The Committee considered and agreed a number of proposals concerning the format of minutes, the presentation of draft minutes to the Board and the timing of meetings.

The Committee agreed to reserve the first Thursday in August 2005 as a provisional date in the diary for a meeting of the Board which would proceed under paragraph 1(c) of the Standing Orders, if the meeting was deemed to be justified.

The Committee agreed to give further consideration to increasing the number of Members appointed to the smaller committees prior to the next elections to committees.

It was agreed, that with regard to revising the business of the Finance and General Purposes Committee and the Audit and Best Value Committee, that the Chief Executive should further discuss the matter with both Committee Chairmen and refer the matter back to the next meeting of the Committee.

The Committee noted that following appropriate amendment subsequent consultation with the Crown Solicitor's Office and review under the Board's Equality Scheme, a revised paper would be brought to a future Board meeting for approval.

7. CORPORATE PLAN 2002 – 2005 – UPDATE

The Committee noted a paper charting progress on meeting the Board's corporate objectives for 2002 – 2005.

8. STAFF ATTITUDES SURVEY

The Chairman reminded Members of discussion at the previous meeting concerning a Staff Attitudes Survey conducted with Policing Board staff. The Committee noted an analysis of the main comparisons between the 2002 and 2004 Staff Attitudes Surveys.

9. EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON THE BOARD'S POLICING PLAN POLICY

The Board noted a paper outlining the outcomes of equality impact assessments on data collection policy and policing plan policy. The Committee noted that formal consultation on the policies had now been completed.

10. BENEVOLENT FUNDING

The Committee noted a paper containing information in relation to the benevolent services available to the police.

11. THIRD REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING COMMISSION

The Committee noted a paper summarising the issues identified in the 3rd report of the Independent Monitoring Commission published on 4 November 2004.

During discussion of this item, a Member requested that officials make arrangements for the Committee to be advised of Government policy regarding restorative justice schemes.

12. REPORT ON REVIEW OF NORTHERN IRELAND POLICE FUND

The Board noted the content of a Review of the Northern Ireland Police Fund by Mr John Steele.

The Committee agreed that Mr Steele should be invited to a future Committee meeting to discuss his review and that the paper concerning Benevolent Funding (Item 10) should be used as a background paper for discussion.

13. INFORMATION PAPERS

13.1 Independent Monitoring Commission On The Security Normalisation: Figures On Troop Numbers

The Committee noted:-

- Correspondence received from the Secretary of State concerning revised figures for troop numbers in Northern Ireland for the period June 2003 – May 2004
- That the revised figures had been deemed by the IMC as not affecting their conclusions

13.2 Provision Of Stab Resistant Vests For PSNI Officers

The Committee noted a letter dated 2 November 2004 from the Chief Constable, notifying the Board of his intention to equip (over a period of time) PSNI officers with stab resistant vests. The Committee examined 2 samples of stab resistant vests.

14. PROPOSED CLOSURE OF PSNI STATIONS – ANDERSONSTOWN, MOY, CALEDON AND BALLYGAWLEY

The Chairman reminded Members that, at the October Corporate Policy Committee meeting, Members had approved a framework document for considering potential station closures. The Committee noted that completed frameworks had been received from PSNI in respect of Andersonstown, Moy, Caledon and Ballygawley.

The Committee considered the information supplied in each of the framework documents.

14.1 Andersonstown

The Committee considered the framework document for Andersonstown station.

A Member highlighted the opposition of the Belfast DPP to the proposed closure of the station. The Vice-Chairman outlined the main issues arising from his discussion with representations from the Belfast DPP concerning the matter.

The Committee recognised that consideration of any proposed closure of a station would be facilitated by the development of a comprehensive PSNI estates strategy, covering the whole of Northern Ireland.

Following further discussion, a Member proposed that the Committee should refuse to accept the proposal by the PSNI to close the station. Following a show of hands, the proposal was lost.

A Member proposed that the Committee recommend to the Board that Andersonstown station be closed and disposed of, as proposed by PSNI. Following a show of hands the proposal was agreed.

14.2 Moy, Caledon And Ballygawley

Members discussed the impact of the closure of 3 stations in the Dungannon and South Tyrone district.

The Committee noted that PSNI had been unable to consult with the local DPP to date, as none existed in that area. The Committee agreed that with a local DPP being established in the near future, that its members should be given the opportunity to comment on the proposals.

The Committee agreed that PSNI should be requested to consult with the Dungannon and South Tyrone DPP concerning the proposed closure of Moy, Caledon and Ballygawley stations and advise the Committee of the result of these discussions. The proposed closures would also be considered in the light of the Estates Strategy which it is anticipated will be available in December 2004.

A Member expressed concern at comments contained in the framework document concerning the likely reaction of local politicians to the closure. It was agreed that such comments were unacceptable.

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

There were no matters arising.

16. PRESS ISSUES

There were no matters arising.

17. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was conducted.

18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was arranged for 16 December 2004.

(Meeting closed 12:45 pm).

Secretariat

November 2004

Chairman