NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE 48th CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2005 AT 10:00 AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:		Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
	(4)	Mr Alex Attwood
		Mr Joe Byrne
	(1)	Mr Fred Cobain
		Mr Brian Dougherty
	(5)	Mr Barry Gilligan
		Mrs Pauline McCabe
	(3)	Mr Alan McFarland
	(2)	Mr Eddie McGrady
		Mrs Rosaleen Moore
	(6)	Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:	**(7)**	Sir Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
	(7)	Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief Constable)
	(9)	Mr Roy Toner (ACC Operational Support & Change Management)
	(8)	Ms Sinead McSweeney (Head of Press and Media)
	(9)	Two PSNI Personnel
INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT PANEL:	**(10)**	Sir Keith Povey
	(10)	Mr Graham Gordon
	(10)	Mrs Rotha Johnston
OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:		Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
		Mr Peter Holt (Director of Communications)
		Mr David Jackson (Director of Community Affairs)
		Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate Services)
		Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
		Mrs Sinead Simpson (Director of Policy)
		Two Board Officials

(1) Item number 3.7 to close
(2) Item number 3.10 to close
(3) Item number 6 to 20, 22 to close
(4) Item number 6 to 20, part item 22 to close
(5) Items 6 to 20, item 23, part item 24
(6) Except Item 6
(7) Items 21, 22 and 23 only
(8) Item 21 only
(9) Items 21 and 22 only
(10) Item 24 only

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Mr Bradley and Mr Wilson. NOTED.

Mr Wilson had nominated Mr Paisley Jnr as a substitute. NOTED.

2. MINUTES OF THE 47th CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 SEPTEMBER 2005

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the previous meeting.

It was:

AGREED

That the minutes of the Corporate Policy Committee meeting held on 15 September 2005 should be agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 47th MEETING

PSNI Senior Civilian Staff – Pay And Allowances (Item 3.1 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that discussions were continuing with PSNI regarding assimilation into the new arrangements. NOTED.

Independent Assessment Of Board Performance (Item 3.2 Of Minutes Refers)

This matter was dealt with under item 24.

3.3 Independent Monitoring Commission (Item 3.3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee discussed a meeting which had been held with the Independent Monitoring Commission on 12 October 2005.

3.4 Police Authority Of Northern Ireland Debtor (Item 3.15 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that a letter had been received from the RUC George Cross Foundation regarding a specific project which the monies could assist in funding. A paper would be brought to the November Committee meeting for consideration. NOTED.

3.5 Members Training Programme (Item 5.3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chief Executive informed the Committee that the training updates would be provided to Members on 22 November 2005. Details of the event would be circulated to all Board Members. NOTED.

3.6 Policing Board Accounts 2004/05 (Item 5.4 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chief Executive updated the Committee on a recent discussion which had taken place with the NIO Permanent Under Secretary in relation to the proposed qualification regarding an overdraft on a bank account, relating to the drawing down of funds for PSNI. NOTED.

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

Officials advised that a paper would be brought to a future Committee meeting in relation to issues arising from the recommendations flowing from discussion papers prepared by Mr Peter Smyth QC on Defining the Role of the Board. NOTED.

3.8 Identifying Strategic Issues – Top Ten Agenda (Item 7 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that a questionnaire had been issued to all Members requesting that they prioritise the Top Ten agenda items identified. A paper outlining details of the results would be brought back to the Committee. NOTED.

3.9 Gratuity Payment For Part-Time Reserve (Item 9 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee considered the content of a letter which had been received from the Chief Constable regarding a proposal for a gratuity payment for members of the Part-Time Reserve. NOTED.

It was:-

RECOMMENDED

That the Board should be asked to reach a corporate view on whether to support a gratuity payment for Part-Time Reserve Officers and raise the issue with the NIO.

3.10 Handling Of Leaked Documents (Item 10 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that a paper would be provided for consideration at the November meeting regarding the handling of leaked documents. NOTED.

3.11 Northern Ireland Crime Statistics: Comparisons With England And Wales (Item 14 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that a news release had been issued regarding a Summary Report which provided figures for crimes and clearances recorded in Northern Ireland compared to Home Office recorded crime figures for England and Wales. NOTED.

It was:

AGREED

That Officials should make enquiries to Courts Service in relation to failure to appear warrants.

3.12 Restorative Justice (Item 16.2 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chairman advised Members that the NIO had been requested to provide a copy of the Codes of Practice for Restorative Justice to the Community Involvement Committee. To date a copy of the Codes had not been received by the Board.

The Chairman also reminded Members of discussion at the 5 October 2005 Board meeting regarding Restorative Justice and confirmed that he had written to the Secretary of State summarising the grave concerns expressed by Members and requesting an urgent meeting to discuss the matter. To date an acknowledgement had been received but no substantive reply. The Chairman advised he would raise the issue again with Secretary of State following the meeting. NOTED.

Members expressed their concern and disappointment at the lack of response and the lack of consultation involving the Board concerning Restorative Justice.

The view was advocated that the Board could be appointed as the oversight body for restorative justice and community safety.

During discussion:

It was:

AGREED

That a breakdown of the various Community Restorative Groups already established should be obtained and this should identify those involving the PSNI and those which did not involve PSNI.

It was:

RESOLVED

- To formally request a copy of the draft protocol concerning Community Restorative Justice received by PSNI.
- To issue a news release to highlight the unanimous concerns of Members.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

4.1 Engagements

The Chairman had undertaken the following engagements:-

- Meeting with ACC Crime Operations and a representative from MI5 – 11 October 2005. NOTED.
- Dinner – Law Society of Northern Ireland – 14 October 2005. NOTED.
- National Level Conference on Improving Investigative Performance – Templepatrick – 18 October 2005. NOTED.
- Association of Police Authorities Plenary Meeting – Cardiff – 18 and 19 October 2005. NOTED.
- Joint NIPB/PSNI Briefing to District Policing Partnerships on PSNI Estates Strategy – Belfast – 18 October 2005. NOTED.
- Northern Ireland Affairs Committee – Belfast – 18 October 2005. NOTED.

4.2 Publications

The following publications had been placed in the library:-

- Dedication of the RUC George Cross Room, Bramshill – 1 June 2005. NOTED.
- Creating Change for Generations – Groundwork Northern Ireland Annual Report 2004-05 – September 2005. NOTED.

4.3 Correspondence

The Chairman had received the following correspondence:-

- Letter from Assistant Chief Constable Gillespie regarding the implementation of VISOR in Northern Ireland. NOTED.
- Letter from the Northern Ireland Office regarding secondment of PSNI Officers to the Garda Siochana. NOTED.
- Letter from the Chairperson of the RUC Widow's Association regarding her attendance at the Board Meeting on 5 October 2005. NOTED.
- Letter from the Police Ombudsman regarding regulation 20 recommendations. NOTED.
- Report from British Irish Rights Watch and Report entitled "Plastic Bullets: A Human Rights Perspective". NOTED.

The Chairman requested that a copy of the British Irish Rights Watch Report on Plastic Bullets should be issued to all Board Members.

4.4 News Releases

The Chairman highlighted the following news releases:-

- Crime at Seven Year Low – Report – Northern Ireland Office – 31 August 2005. NOTED.
- Good work must continue on fighting crime – Hanson – Northern Ireland Office – 31 August 2005. NOTED.
- Support for Police must be unequivocal – Hain – Northern Ireland Office – 14 September 2005. NOTED.
- Assets Recovery Agency Reaches Settlement in Gault case – Assets Recovery Agency – 3 October 2005. NOTED.
- Assets Recovery Agency Investigates £30m Property Portfolio in Manchester area – Assets Recovery Agency – 6 October 2005. NOTED.
- Domestic Violence will not be tolerated – Hanson – Northern Ireland Office – 10 October 2005. NOTED.
- PSNI and an Garda Siochana Exchange Programme welcomed – Hain – Northern Ireland Office – 10 October 2005. NOTED.
- Cross Border Organised Criminals are being vigorously pursued – Organised Crime Task Force – 12 October 2005. NOTED.
- Developments in Northern Ireland during the Summer recess period – Secretary of State – Northern Ireland Office – 13 October 2005. NOTED.
- Hain confirms continuation of Policing Board Membership – Northern Ireland Office – 13 October 2005. NOTED.

4.5 December Board Meeting

The Chairman advised the Committee that the Deputy Chief Constable would be representing the Chief Constable at the Board meeting on 7 December 2005. NOTED.

4.6 NIPB/PSNI Strategy Event – 28 October 2005

The Chairman reminded the Committee about the NIPB/PSNI Strategy Day which would be held on 25 October 2005. NOTED.

4.7 Special Meeting Of Belfast District Policing Partnership

The Committee noted details of a special meeting of Belfast District Policing Partnership which the Chairman had attended on 11 October 2005. NOTED**.**

A Member raised the issue of the relationship between the PSNI and the unionist community in North and West Belfast; and

It was:

AGREED

That the Chief Constable should be asked to give a briefing to Members in relation to Policing with the Community in North and West Belfast.

4.8 Meeting With Parliamentary Under Secretary Of State For Northern Ireland

The Committee considered the content of a letter which had been received from the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Northern Ireland regarding current issues which had been discussed at a meeting which the Chairman and Vice-Chairman had attended on 7 September 2005.

It was:

AGREED

That a letter should be sent to the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State in relation to comments in the letter regarding DPP/CSP structures.

4.9 Continuation Of Policing Board Membership

The Chairman referred to the Secretary of State's announcement in the House of Commons on 12 October 2005 regarding the continuation of Members appointment until 31 March 2006. The Board would be reconstituted on 1 April 2006 using the D'Hondt formula applied to the 2003 Assembly Election Results for political Members and that a competition would be launched shortly for Independent Members.

It was:

AGREED

That Officials would arrange for a representative from NIO to brief current Independent Members of the Board regarding the recruitment process for appointment of Independent Members.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

5.1 Conference

The Chief Executive advised the Committee about a conference which would be held in London on 22 November 2005 entitled "Achieving the Outcomes of Gershon". Mr Paisley Jnr who had expressed an interest in attending the conference indicated that he no longer wished to attend due to the Board's Training Event being held on the same date. NOTED.

5.2 DPPs

The Chief Executive advised the Committee about two recent incidents which affected the public meetings of Newry and Mourne and Larne DPPs. NOTED.

5.3 New Police College

The Chief Executive advised the Committee that the Police College Project Board had signed off the outline business case number 2 for the College at a meeting held on 11 October 2005. The case would be presented to the Board on 3 November 2005. NOTED.

5.4 Revised Committee Structures

The Chief Executive updated the Committee on the revised Committee structures which were due to be implemented following the November Board meeting. A draft schedule of dates of Committee meetings for 2006 would be presented to the November Board meeting. NOTED.

6. RECRUITMENT OF AN ASSISTANT CHIEF CONSTABLE

The Committee considered a draft advertisement, person specification, procedure documents and application form for the recruitment of an Assistant Chief Constable.

Officials advised that, in line with national arrangements, the Assistant Chief Constable post would be permanent and not a fixed term appointment.

It was:

RESOLVED

To approve the draft documentation for the recruitment of the Assistant Chief Constable.

7. SENIOR OFFICERS ALLOWANCES

The Committee was reminded, that at its June 2005 meeting, it was agreed that research should be carried out concerning remuneration packages being offered by Police Services to attract applicants for Chief Officer positions. The Committee considered the current package available to Chief Officers in PSNI and proposals to ensure that the remuneration package for PSNI Chief Officers is competitive, prior to advertising the next ACC vacancy.

The Committee considered a letter from the Chief Constable on this issue.

Following discussion:

It was:

RESOLVED

- To provide transitional arrangements – support provided by the Board and PSNI for officers transferring from another Force.
- To provide a training and development bursary for chief officers.

It was:

AGREED

That Officials should further research a proposal to review the car allowance for Chief Officers.

8. PROGRESS ON 2005 - 06 CORPORATE BUSINESS PLAN

The Committee considered a paper detailing the progress reached at the end of September 2005 toward the target set in the 2005-06 Policing Board Business Plan. The Committee was pleased to note good progress across the range of objectives in the Corporate Business Plan. NOTED.

9. INVESTORS IN PEOPLE ACCREDITATION

The Committee considered a paper confirming that the Board was reassessed against the Investors in People Standard and following a review which took place in September 2005, had successfully retained its status as an Investor in People. The Committee recorded its congratulations to the staff involved. NOTED.

10. OUTREACH INITIATIVES AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS ACTIVITIES

This paper was withdrawn.

11. GAINING THE CO-OPERATION OF THE PUBLIC IN SUPPORT OF THE POLICE IN REDUCING CRIME

It was:

AGREED

To consider this paper at the next meeting of the Committee, in the context of the Independent Assessment Panel's Report.

12. DEVELOPMENT OF THE NATIONAL POLICING IMPROVEMENT AGENCY (NPIA)

The Committee considered a paper which provided detail on the development of the new National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) which, subject to legislation, will come into effect on 1 April. NOTED

A number of comments were made regarding the proposals and officials undertook to reflect these to the NPIA Programme Team.

13. 6th REPORT OF THE INDEPENDENT MONITORING COMMISSION (IMC)

The Committee considered a summary of the 6th Report of the Independent Monitoring Commission, published on 22 September 2005. NOTED

14. HUMAN RIGHTS AND ACCOUNTABILITY THEMATIC REPORT FROM THE OVERSIGHT COMMISSIONER – SEPTEMBER 2005

Members considered the comments made by the Oversight Commissioner in his most recent report, concerning a number of different forms of accountability.

It was:

AGREED

To further consider the Oversight Commission's comments concerning democratic accountability at a future meeting.

15. REVIEW OF THE SENTENCING FRAMEWORK IN NORTHERN IRELAND CONSULTATION REPORT

The Committee considered a paper summarising a consultation report from the Northern Ireland Office, detailing responses into a review of the sentencing framework in Northern Ireland. NOTED.

A Member requested further details of the number of responses that had been received by the NIO to the consultation report.

16. RELEASE OF PERSONS DETAINED ON LICENCE

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

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

There were no matters arising.

18. COMMUNICATION ACTIVITY

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

19. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters arising.

20. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S ANNUAL PAY REVIEW AND NICS BONUS SCHEME - 2005

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Committee.

21. PRESENTATION ON PSNI MEDIA AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable and PSNI Head of Press and Media to the meeting.

The Head of Press and Media gave a presentation on the role and work of the PSNI Media and Public Relations Department. During the presentation, the Head of Media commented on the following:-

- The PSNI Communications Strategy.
- The impact of Policing Plan changes on the Communications Strategy.
- The use of resources.
- The adoption of the National Intelligence Model for planning purposes within the Department.
- Reactive activity.
- Departmental priorities.
- Ongoing restructuring.
- Plans for a joint PSNI / Policing Board safety campaign.

During the discussion which followed, Members raised a number of issues including:-

- The measures taken by the Department to reassure all sections of the community regarding the level and quality, particularly following confrontation with the police.
- Internal communications strategies.
- Decision levels relating to the release of information in DCUs.
- The perception of the response to local media requests for information.

Following this discussion, the Head of Press and Media left the meeting.

22. PRESENTATION BY PSNI ON NEW NON-EMERGENCY NUMBER AND CALL MANAGEMENT

ACC Operational Support and Change Management delivered a presentation to Members on the progress in developing new Call Management arrangements and a new non-emergency police number.

A copy of the slides used in the presentation is attached at Appendix ‘A’.

During the presentation, the PSNI representatives identified the objectives of the new Call Management system as being:-

- Consistent and professional service delivery for non-emergency requests.
- A reduction in the number of non-emergency calls to the 999 service.
- Centralised and efficient crime recording facilities.

A pilot scheme involving South Belfast, Lisburn and Craigavon DCUs is being introduced. An advertising campaign to promote the use of the new non-emergency number – 0845 – 6008000 will be run during the period November 2005 to January 2006. A DVD of the new television advertisement was viewed by Members.

Following the presentation, the meeting discussed a number of issues including:-

- The advantages of a combined Call Centre for police, ambulance and fire services. The PSNI representatives indicated that neither the Ambulance Service or the Fire Authority had made any financial provision for a centralised system in the near future and that such a development would require input from the other 2 services.
- In response to a number of questions, the PSNI representatives advised that at present it was not possible for PSNI to use a 3 digit number as the allocation of these numbers was on a national basis. However, there are plans to introduce a single non-emergency call number nationally and it will be a relatively simple technical arrangement to change the call number when the national number becomes active.
- The PSNI representatives were confident that, even in the absence of a joint Call Management Centre, that co-ordination between the police, fire and ambulance services was currently and would continue to be fit for purpose.

- The revised Call Management System will assist in improving procedures for police to call back members of the public to follow up action and provide further information.
- Members emphasised the need for appropriate training to be provided for police officers and civilian staff operating the new system.
- The new Call Management System would also provide information on response times and assist in the categorisation of response priorities.

It was:

AGREED

That the Board would again raise the issue of the provision of a joint Call Management Centre for police, fire and ambulance services with Government.

Following the presentation, ACC Operational Support and Change Management left the meeting.

23. BRIEFING BY PSNI ON LEGAL ACTION AGAINST THE PSNI

The Committee discussed the judgement handed down by the Rt. Hon. Sir Liam McCollum in the case of Northern Ireland Sheet Metal Works Limited – v – the PSNI.

The Chief Executive outlined the legal opinion which had been received regarding the Board's position relating to the case. The advice received indicated that the Board had no locus to direct the Chief Constable to act in a particular way but it could seek to persuade him to follow a particular course of action. NOTED.

Members discussed the legal opinion and a news release issued by PSNI concerning the case.

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Constable and Deputy Chief Constable to the meeting and invited them to brief Members on the recent High Court case, Northern Ireland Sheet Metal Works Limited – v – PSNI and the follow-up action taken by PSNI in response to the comments of the Rt. Hon. Sir Liam McCollum.

In opening the briefing, the Chief Constable reminded the Committee that the contract was awarded prior to the creation of PSNI and the Board. The Chief Constable emphasised that the ballistic steel protection kits currently fitted to PSNI vehicles is fit for purpose. He drew attention to the opening paragraph of the judgement beginning *'I have only heard some of the evidence in this case'*.

The meeting discussed the comments made by the Judge and the investigative process initiated by the PSNI to date. The Chief Constable emphasised that primacy would be given to the criminal investigation.

The Chief Constable informed Members that a criminal investigation would be taken forward by Crime Operations Department. A meeting had been arranged between ACC Crime Operations and an independent expert in criminal fraud with a view to engaging his services to quality assure the criminal investigation. The Chief Constable described the historic nature of the investigation and reminded Members that procurement processes had changed significantly since this particular contract had been agreed.

A number of Members stressed the need for public reassurance that the investigations would be carried out as quickly and as openly as possible. They sought to persuade the Chief Constable that the senior investigating officer appointed to the case should be from outside PSNI, this was the consensus view of the Committee. The Chief Constable indicated that the senior investigating officer could be from outside the PSNI. He also invited the Board to participate in an advisory group or Gold Group which would oversee the investigation.

The Chief Constable briefed Members on the process that could be adopted to investigate the current procurement process within PSNI to ensure it was operating in accordance with best practice. It was proposed to appoint a firm of outside professional consultants to examine the current system. The Chief Constable confirmed that the Board would be updated on this process.

The following issues were discussed:-

- The information given by PSNI to their legal advisors about the case.
- The legal advice which the PSNI had received in the case.
- The role of the Procurement Service in providing advice on contracts to PSNI.
- Personnel issues.
- The review of procurement processes within PSNI.
- The need to seek clarification concerning paragraphs 19 and 20 of the judgement.

Following the discussion, the PSNI representatives left the meeting.

24. BRIEFING BY THE INDEPENDENT ASSESSMENT PANEL APPOINTED TO ASSESS THE BOARD'S PERFORMANCE

The Chairman welcomed Sir Keith Povey (Panel Chairman), Mrs Rotha Johnston and Mr Graham Gordon to the meeting.

Sir Keith Povey advised that due to other engagements Independent Assessment Panel members, Professor Mackey and Dr Manning had sent their apologies for non-attendance.

Sir Keith Povey reminded Members that he had been commissioned by the Board to review the performance of the Policing Board over its first 4 years of operation and to identify key areas for future action. He presented Members with the Panel's report.

The Chairman advised Members that the content of the report should remain ‘confidential’ pending a decision by the Board on its publication.

The Committee discussed the content of the report with the Panel.

It was:

AGREED

That Board Members who wished to comment on the content of the report should be invited to write to the Chief Executive and that any comments received would be considered by the Board at its meeting on 3 November 2005. Where the Board reaches a view that the Panel may wish to reflect further on any aspect of the report, then this will be considered by the Panel.

The Chairman thanked the Independent Assessment Panel for their input and they left the meeting.

25. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was arranged for 16 November 2005 at 10:00am.

(Meeting closed 3:40 pm)

Secretariat
October 2005

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CHAIRMAN