

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE 53rd CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 8 MARCH 2006 AT 10:00AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Joe Byrne
(1) Mr Brian Dougherty
(2) Mrs Pauline McCabe
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
(2) Mr Ian Paisley Jnr

OFFICIALS:

Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate Services)
Mr David Jackson (Director of Community Affairs)
Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
(3) Three Officials

- (1) Item number 3.5 to close
- (2) Item number 4.3 to close
- (3) Except item numbers 9, part 12.2, 12.3 and 12.4

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Mr Bradley, Mr Cobain, Mr McGrady, Mr Sharma and Mr Wilson. NOTED.

Mr McGrady had nominated Mr Byrne as his substitute and Mr Wilson had nominated Mr Paisley Jnr as his substitute. NOTED.

2. MINUTES OF CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16 FEBRUARY 2006

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the previous meeting.

It was:-

AGREED

That the draft minutes of the Corporate Policy Committee meeting held on 16 February 2006 should be agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE 52nd MEETING

3.1 Community Restorative Justice (Item 3.2 and 16 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chairman advised Members that further to discussion at the Board meeting on 1 March 2006, the Board's response to the Government's proposals for Community Based Restorative Justice Schemes had been finalised and forwarded to the NIO. NOTED.

The Board would have an opportunity to discuss its response with the Minister of State on 28 March 2006, when the Minister is due to meet with the Board. NOTED.

The Chief Executive advised that arrangements were in place to publicise the Board's response to the guidelines in conjunction with the meeting with the Minister. NOTED.

3.2 National Policing Improvement Agency (Item 3.3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chief Executive informed Members that the legislation to provide for the establishment of a National Policing Improvement Agency was progressing. The issues raised by the Board and the Chief Constable had been addressed in the draft legislation. From a Board viewpoint, this matter was concluded. NOTED.

3.3 Taser (Item 5.3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chief Executive advised Members that consultations with PSNI were ongoing concerning the arrangement of a public information meeting on Taser. A letter was being drafted to statutory agencies and other consultees seeking their views. Feedback from the responses will be brought to the Board meeting on 28 March 2006. The dates under consideration for holding the information seminar are 20 or 21 March 2006. NOTED.

3.4 Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI) Report On Target Setting And Performance Management In The Criminal Justice System In Northern Ireland (Item 12 Of Minutes Refers)

The PSNI is currently drafting a substantive response to the CJINI report on Target Setting and Performance Management in the Criminal Justice System. NOTED.

It was:-

AGREED

That the PSNI response to the CJINI report should be considered by this Committee's successor – the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee at its first meeting.

3.5 Conferences – Democratic Dialogue (Item 19.1 Of Minutes Refers)

Further to discussion at the Board meeting on 1 March 2006, the Chief Executive provided the Committee with further details about the series of 4 conferences. He stated that he had been advised by Democratic Dialogue that the events were an initiative by the Probation Board for Northern Ireland. Each political party had been invited to send a representative to speak at one of the 4 events. NOTED.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

4.1 Engagements

The Chairman had undertaken the following engagements:-

- dinner with representatives of the media – Belfast – 7 March 2006.
- meeting with Mr Shaun Woodward, Security Minister – 6 March 2006 – Stormont House. The Chairman outlined the main issues discussed which included:-
 - DPPs / CSPs – future structures and draft Code of Practice.
 - proposals for a policing conference.
 - the Devolution Bill.
 - the funding gap for the new police training college.

4.2 Publications

There were no matters arising.

4.3 Correspondence

The Chairman had received the following correspondence:-

- letter from Mr Robin Newton MLA dated 2 March 2006 concerning the District Policing Partnership in Belfast. NOTED.

4.4 News Releases

There were no matters arising.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

5.1 Review Of PSNI Underwater Search Unit And Search And Rescue Team

The Chief Executive informed the Board that he received a letter from Assistant Chief Constable, Operational Support seeking the views of the Board regarding a review of the Underwater Search Unit and the Search and Rescue Team (formerly known as the Mountain Rescue Team).

Members recommended that a number of issues be addressed in the review, including:-

- The need for the review to identify the full range of options to PSNI in providing underwater search and search and rescue services to the Northern Ireland public.
- The inclusion of a communications strategy to address public expectations in connection with these services.
- That options for mutual assistance throughout the British Isles be included.
- The securing of funding from other agencies who benefit from the search and rescue expertise and services provided by police.
- The publication of a clear policy and protocols for prioritising work by both units.

It was:-

AGREED

That officials should prepare a draft response, based on the Committee's comments for the Board to consider at its next meeting on 28 March 2006.

5.2 Conference

The Chief Executive advised Members of a conference being held on Restorative Justice on 30 March 2006 in London and asked that any Member interested in attending contact Secretariat for details.

5.3 Implementation Review – Garda Siochana

The Chief Executive informed Members about the publication of a report by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform Implementation Review Group on the Garda Siochana Act 2005. Any Member wishing to secure a copy was asked to contact Secretariat. NOTED.

5.4 Tender Evaluation Panel – PSNI Recruitment Service Provider

The Chief Executive informed Members that he had received a request from PSNI to participate in a tender evaluation panel to appoint the PSNI recruitment service provider. He advised that the Board's current response to invitations to sit on PSNI tender evaluation panels and recruitment was to deal with each one on an ad hoc basis. The Chief Executive sought the views of the Committee on the development of a policy in this regard.

The Committee discussed the principles of developing a policy with regard to Board Members and officials sitting on PSNI tender evaluation and recruitment panels. Members discussed the need for balance between the Board closely monitoring and assuring itself of the integrity of the procurement process within PSNI, yet not becoming directly involved in PSNI management decisions.

It was:-

AGREED

That officials should draft a paper outlining the options available for the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee to consider.

The Committee then discussed the specific request from PSNI that the Chief Executive should sit on the tender evaluation panel for the PSNI recruitment service provider. A number of Members expressed concerns about the current contract, particularly with regard to it not having been audited to date. It was highlighted that the first engagement of the panel is planned to take place in July 2006.

Following further discussion, it was:-

RECOMMENDED

- That as part of the ongoing review of the PSNI procurement processes, the Board should suggest to PSNI that the independent consultants should consider and make a recommendation concerning the role of the Board in their review of the procurement process system.
- That the Chairman should write to the Chief Constable outlining the concerns raised by Members regarding the existing contract.
- That PSNI should consider carrying out an internal audit of the current contract before the tender for the new contract is issued.

6. REVIEW OF STANDING ORDERS

The Committee considered a paper which proposed a number of changes to the Board's Standing Orders, Code of Conduct for Board Members and the Roles of Committees, in advance of the reconstitution of the Board in April 2006.

Following discussion, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That the text of the Standing Orders and the Appendix to the Standing Orders setting out the Roles of Committees, be updated to reflect the new Committee structure and the revised composition of Corporate Policy,

Planning and Performance Committee, and that the revised delegated matters in respect of each Committee be approved by the Board.

The Chief Executive advised Members of his intention to include a financial delegation of up to £10,000 for each Committee in respect of expenditure already contained within approved budgets in a paper to be put to the Board. NOTED.

The Committee considered proposals to amend the Code of Conduct for Board Members.

With regard to the proposal to amend paragraph 4:

It was:-

RECOMMENDED

That the Board should include an additional bullet point under General Responsibilities for Board Members making explicit reference to equality, human rights and diversity, subject to the inclusion of the word “respect”.

With regard to paragraph 23 (b):

It was:-

RECOMMENDED

That an alternative wording for the phrase “pre-determined brief” be inserted.

It was:

RECOMMENDED

That the Board approve an amendment to the section on public comment, to reflect the revised position adopted by the Board in respect of Chairs of Committees.

With regard to paragraph 24 (d):

It was:-

RECOMMENDED

That the Board approve an amendment providing that Members who do not give an undertaking to maintain confidentiality may be excluded from confidential briefings to the Board.

With regard to paragraph 24,

It was:-

RECOMMENDED

That the Board include an explanation on the definition of “Any person” referred to in the text of the section on confidentiality, to include family members, legal advisors and party political colleagues not represented on the Board.

7. DRAFT POLICY ON MEMBERS SERVICES – IT, TELECOMMUNICATIONS AND SECURE STORAGE

The Committee considered a paper which set out a policy on Members Services – IT, Telecommunications and Secure Storage to be implemented in respect of the new Board.

It was:-

RECOMMENDED

That the policy should be approved subject to officials considering an allowance or a lump sum for Board related calls instead of a percentage of itemised calls.

8. INTERVIEW PANEL – APPOINTMENT OF A DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

The Committee considered a paper concerning the composition of the selection panel for the appointment of a Deputy Chief Executive to the Policing Board.

It was:-

RESOLVED

That the composition of the panel should be the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the reconstituted Board; the Chief Executive; and one other Member of the reconstituted Board, to be selected by the Chairman and Vice-Chairman, to ensure a selection panel that is balanced as far as possible in terms of gender and community background.

9. REVIEW OF BOARD STAFFING REQUIREMENTS – FURTHER PROPOSALS

The Chief Executive briefed Members on further proposals regarding the review of the Board's staffing requirements and responded to questions.

Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED:

- That the new External Relations Directorate be structured into 3 areas of work:
 - External Communications (Press / PR).
 - Community Engagement.
 - DPP Support.
- That the overall staffing establishment be revised and reduced to reflect the needs of the Board and in light of future budgetary pressures as outlined by the Chief Executive.
- That the resourcing of Best Value Reviews of Board services and activities be undertaken externally.

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

There were no matters arising.

11. PRESS ISSUES

There were no matters arising.

12. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

12.1 Appointment Of Senior Personnel In PSNI

A Member proposed that the Board review its process for appointing senior officers with a view to refining the competence based approach and the current scoring system.

The Committee discussed a number of issues relating to the recent selection process for an Assistant Chief Constable.

During discussion, officials reminded Members that a panel was currently looking at senior appointments to police forces in England and Wales and is likely to produce recommendations in the near future.

Members discussed:-

- national practice for appointing senior police officers.
- the size of the appointment panel.
- the current scoring system.
- the benefits of including the Chief Constable in the decision making process for ACC and DCC posts.

It was:-

AGREED

That the Chairman should discuss the issues raised by the Committee with the Chief Constable and HMIC and the matter be considered by the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee in due course.

12.2 Invitation To Speak At US House Of Representatives Foreign Relations Committee

Mrs McCabe advised the Committee that she had received a letter of invitation to speak to a House of Representatives Foreign Relations Committee in Washington on 15 March 2006 regarding issues relating to PSNI Human Resources. She sought the approval of the Committee to represent the Board.

A Member suggested that it would be helpful to adjourn the meeting to enable the invitation to be further considered by the Chairman, Mrs McCabe and the Chief Executive and a recommendation brought back to the Committee.

Following an adjournment, it was:-

RESOLVED

That Mrs McCabe should report to the source of the letter advising that as the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Board are in Washington for the events of St Patrick's week that they should present to the House of Representatives Committee.

Mrs McCabe asked that it be recorded that she considered this decision as unfortunate, as she had chaired this area of work for the term of the Board and is in a good position to represent the Board on this issue.

12.3 Conduct Of Senior Officer Regulations 2000

The Chief Executive briefed Member on progress regarding a complaint which was being dealt with under the Conduct of Senior Officer Regulations 2000.

12.4 Senior Civilian Staff - Assimilation

The Committee was briefed on the conclusion of discussions between the Chief Executive and Deputy Chief Constable and current senior civilian staff on their assimilation to the new terms and conditions for the posts as adopted by the Board and approved by the Secretary of State.

Following discussion, it was:

RESOLVED

To endorse the proposed assimilation arrangements for current senior civilian staff.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Chairman reminded Members that this was the last meeting of the Corporate Policy Committee as it was currently constituted. The first meeting of the Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee had been arranged, subject to the approval of the reconstituted Board, for 25 April 2006 at 10.00am.

(Meeting closed 12:00 noon).

Secretariat

March 2006

Chairman