

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE POLICY, PLANNING & PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 FEBRUARY 2009 AT 2:00PM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)

Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice Chairman)

Mrs Dolores Kelly

(1) Mr Basil McCrea

(2) Mr Alex Maskey

(1) Mrs Rosaleen Moore

(3) Mr Ian Paisley Jnr

Mr Brian Rea

Mr Trevor Ringland

(4) Mr Jimmy Spratt

FORENSIC SCIENCE NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

(5) Mr Stan Brown, Chief Executive

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Dr Debbie Donnelly (A/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 5 to close
- (2) Item number 8 to close
- (3) Part item number 9, 10, 12 – 19
- (4) Except Item number 11
- (5) Item number 11 only

1. APOLOGIES, ETC

Apologies for non-attendance were received from Ms Mary McKee. NOTED.

2. MINUTES OF THE CORPORATE POLICY, PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2009

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 15 January 2009 should be agreed.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 JANUARY 2009

3.1 PSNI Communications Strategy (Item 3.3 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee received an update on a meeting held between a Board Member, Board official, and the Head of PSNI Press and Media. Officials advised that progress continued to be made concerning the development of protocols, and the production of a programme for Members highlighting the timetable for future crime prevention initiatives and other PSNI events. Any substantive agreements reached will be brought to a future Committee meeting. NOTED.

3.2 Invitation To Greater Manchester And West Yorkshire Police Authorities (Item 5.1 Of Minutes Refers)

Representatives from Greater Manchester Police Authority and West Yorkshire Police Authority had accepted invitations to attend a future Policing Board meeting. Discussions were ongoing to agree a mutually suitable date and when this is finalised all Board Members will be advised accordingly. NOTED.

3.3 Visit To Washington (Item 5.1 Of Minutes Refers)

The A/Chief Executive informed Members that the delegation to visit Washington for the St Patrick's Day period would be Professor Sir Desmond Rea, Mr Barry Gilligan, Mrs Dolores Kelly, Mr Basil McCrea, Mr Alex Maskey, Mr Ian Paisley Jnr, accompanied by 2 officials. A programme for the visit was being finalised and those involved would receive details as soon as possible. NOTED.

3.4 Final Draft Of Policing Plan 2009/2012 (Item 6 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chairman confirmed that he and the Vice Chairman had signed off the Policing Plan 2009/2012 and that the required documentation was with the printers. NOTED.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

4.1 Engagements

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

- Flax Trust Super Bowl Ball XX – Belfast – 6 February 2009;
- Meeting with Rt Rev Harold Miller, Church of Ireland Bishop of Down and Connor – Belfast – 10 February 2009;
- RUC GC Widows' Association Annual Dinner – La Mon Hotel – 13 February 2009;
- Meeting with Cardinal Sean Brady and Bishop Noel Treanor – Belfast – 17 February 2009;
- Meeting with Students from Centre for Studies in Security and Diplomacy at University of Birmingham – Belfast – 17 February 2009.

NOTED.

4.2 Publications

The Chairman informed Members that the following publications had been received:-

- The Definitive Guide to Workplace;
- Mediation & Managing Conflict at Work – Clive Lewis – February 2009;
- Criminal Cases Review Commission Annual Report and Accounts 2007/08 – Criminal Cases Review Commission – February 2009.

NOTED.

4.3 Correspondence

There were no matters arising.

NOTED.

4.4 News Releases

The Chairman highlighted the following news releases:-

- Tough New Laws On Sexual Offences Introduced - Northern Ireland Office – 2 February 2009;
- Legislation Vital Building Block in Devolution Process – Woodward – Northern Ireland Office – 12 February 2009;
- Policing Board: Committee concerned on increase in use of Stop and Search Powers – Northern Ireland Office – 17 February 2009;
- Newsletter Editorial – ‘Fewer police on the beat’ – 13 February 2009.

NOTED.

4.5 Special Board Meeting – Rank Ratios

The Chairperson of the Human Resources Committee informed Members that consideration was being given to holding a Special Board meeting in April 2009, to consider PSNI Rank Ratios. Details were to be finalised and all Board Members would be invited to attend the meeting. NOTED.

4.6 Briefing From Police Ombudsman

The Chairman informed Members that he had received a confidential briefing from Mr Al Hutchinson, Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland on his investigation into matters arising from police evidence given during a trial at Belfast Crown Court between September 2006 and January 2007. The matter had been referred to the Ombudsman for investigation during the course of the trial of a man on a series of terrorist charges, some of which were related to the Omagh bombing. The Ombudsman had indicated that the findings would be published on Friday, 20 February 2009.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that the Police Ombudsman should be invited to meet with the Board to discuss his findings;
- that a question should be put to the Chief Constable at the next Board meeting concerning the Ombudsman's report.

4.7 APA Allowances

The Chairman informed Members that he had been advised recently that he had an entitlement to claim an allowance of £750 per month, including travel expenses, for attending Board and Committee meetings of the Association of Police Authorities (APA). NOTED.

It was:

AGREED:

That the Chairman should accept the allowance from the APA.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

5.1 Conferences/Seminars/Visits

The A/Chief Executive informed Members about the following conferences/seminars:-

- “How do We Best Enable Children and Adults with Autism to Lead Full Lives” - 27 March 2009 – London;
- A programme on “Public Accountability for Board Members of Arms Length Bodies” – 5 March 2009 – Belfast;
- A conference on Cross Border Fraud, Corruption and European Union Financial Interests – 19/20 March 2009 – Dublin.

Any Member interested in attending the events was asked to contact the Secretariat.

NOTED.

5.2 Accountability Meetings – April – May 2009

The A/Chief Executive reminded the Committee that details of accountability meetings between ACC Rural Region and District Commanders in Rural Region during April and May 2009 had been forwarded to all Members. Any Member interested in attending the meetings was asked to contact the Secretariat. NOTED.

6. DISTRICT POLICING PARTNERSHIP REVIEW SURVEYS 2009

The Committee considered a paper containing questionnaires to be included in the proposed District Policing Partnership (DPP) Review Surveys, due to be conducted in February/March 2009. Officials reminded Members, that at the January 2009 Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee, it had been agreed that the Community Engagement Committee should consider the questionnaires. At its meeting on 22 January 2009, the Community Engagement Committee had agreed the questionnaire content. NOTED.

It was:-

RESOLVED:

To approve the list of proposed questions to be included in the proposed DPP surveys.

7. CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSPECTION NORTHERN IRELAND (CJINI) DRAFT INSPECTION PROGRAMME 2009/2012

The Committee considered a paper containing a Draft Inspection Programme received from Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland (CJINI).

Officials advised, that as part of the development process for the 2009 – 2012 CJINI Corporate Plan, CJINI were seeking the Board's views on its proposed Inspection Programme.

Members discussed the draft programme and while recognising the unique position of CJINI to identify issues common to all criminal justice agencies, concern was expressed that the proposed programme appeared to duplicate aspects of inspections of PSNI already planned by the Board or other agencies. In addition, it was considered that it would be helpful to further develop the relationship between the Board and CJINI to clarify the Board's statutory remit, to ensure there was no duplication of future programmes of work.

It was:-

AGREED:

- to invite the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland to a future Committee meeting to further discuss the programme;
- to ask the Chief Constable for his views on the CJINI Draft Inspection Programme;
- that officials should prepare a briefing paper for the next meeting detailing ongoing or completed inspections of PSNI by CJINI and other agencies and the programmes of inspections of PSNI planned for 2009 – 2012 by all agencies.

8. GOVERNMENT PROPOSALS IN RESPONSE TO A REVIEW OF PACE IN NORTHERN IRELAND – NIO CONSULTATION

The Committee considered a paper which provided details of the Government's proposals to amend the Police and Criminal Evidence (PACE) Act in Northern Ireland.

Members considered whether the Board should submit a response, noting that the Board did not submit a corporate response on the previous NIO consultation in regard to the 2007 review of PACE.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that the Board's Human Rights Adviser should prepare a paper on the proposals for consideration at the March 2009 Committee meeting;
- that the PSNI response to the consultation should be obtained when completed;

- to defer further consideration of the proposals to the March 2009 Committee meeting.

9. RECRUITMENT OF DEPUTY CHIEF CONSTABLE TO THE PSNI – 2009

The Committee considered a paper in relation to the composition of the selection panel for the recruitment of a Deputy Chief Constable to the PSNI.

Members referred to discussions at the February 2009 Board meeting at which the composition of the panel was considered. Members discussed the requirement for elections to take place for the Chairpersons and Vice Chairpersons of the Board and its Committees before the end of May 2009, and the impact of potential changes on the composition of the selection panel.

Officials advised that it would be best practice for the recruitment and selection panel for the appointment of the DCC to remain the same throughout the entire process.
NOTED.

A Member referred to the scoring mechanism used in the appointment and the Chairman indicated that this would be reviewed by the panel.

It was:-

RESOLVED:

That the recruitment and selection panel for the forthcoming Appointment Board for Deputy Chief Constable should comprise, Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairperson), Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice Chairperson), Mrs Dolores Kelly, Mr Basil McCrea, Mr Alex Maskey, Mr Ian Paisley Jnr and Mrs Rosaleen Moore and this panel will remain constant throughout the recruitment exercise.

10. REQUEST FOR USE OF BOARD ACCOMMODATION

The Committee considered a request for the use of Policing Board accommodation for a meeting of the Belfast Local Commissioning Group.

It was:-

AGREED:

- that officials should provide a paper setting out draft guidelines for use of Policing Board accommodation by another organisation;
- that the request would be considered further at the March 2009 Committee meeting.

11. BRIEFING - FORENSIC SCIENCE NORTHERN IRELAND

The Chairman welcomed Mr Stan Brown, Chief Executive, Forensic Science Northern Ireland to the meeting.

Mr Brown briefed Members about:-

- FSNI's role, status and structure;
- the key principles of forensic science;
- forensic science processes at FSNI;
- regulation and the forensic science market;
- FSNI – PSNI strategic issues.

A copy of the slides used during the presentation is attached at Appendix 'A'.

During the presentation, Mr Brown highlighted that as an Executive Agency of the NIO, FSNI is independent from the PSNI. While the PSNI were by far the largest users of FSNI services, it also provided forensic service for the courts, Police Ombudsman,

Public Prosecution Service, State Pathologist, the Historic Enquiries Team and other private organisations. He outlined the capacity – funding issues which the FSNI had to manage and outlined the reasons for backlogs in most forensic institutions throughout the world. Mr Brown also commented on exhibit reception, storage and distribution. He described various forensic processes and outlined the quality management procedures that had been put in place.

Members were also briefed on the urgent requirement for FSNI to be provided with new purpose built accommodation to ensure it would be fit for purpose in future years.

Members raised a number of issues with the Chief Executive, including:-

- FSNI working relationships with other forensic institutes in Europe, North America and in particular, the Republic of Ireland;
- the funding of FSNI subsequent to the devolution of policing and justice;
- the measurement of efficiency and effectiveness within FSNI and quality assurance against the work of other forensic institutions;
- the working relationship between FSNI and PSNI;
- the estimated cost associated with the provision of new accommodation for FSNI.

The Chairman thanked Mr Brown for his contribution and he left the meeting.

12. INFORMATION PAPERS

12.1 Briefing Paper On The Public Protection Arrangements Northern Ireland (PPANI)

The Committee considered a briefing paper which provided an update on the PSNI's contribution to the delivery of the Multi-Agency Sex Offenders Risk Assessment and Management Committee (MASRAM) during the period of August 2007 – January 2009.
NOTED.

A Member sought further clarification in relation to the grading of social workers appointed in such cases. Officials undertook to contact the Member concerned when clarification was received.

12.2 Letter From PSNI Regarding Issue Raised At Board Meeting On 4 December 2008

NOTED.

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

It was agreed a question should be put to the Chief Constable regarding:-

- the Police Ombudsman's report into matters arising from police evidence given during a trial commencing in September 2006.

14. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

There were no matters arising.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 Meeting With First Minister And Deputy First Minister

The Chairman briefed Members on a meeting that he and the Vice Chairman had held with the First Minister and Deputy First Minister concerning the current and future budget of the PSNI. NOTED.

15.2 PSNI Estate Strategy

The Chairman reminded Members that a Special Board meeting was arranged for 20 February 2009 to consider the 2008 Draft PSNI Estate Strategy. He outlined further information that he had received from the Chief Constable.

Members considered the viability of the meeting, given the need for further clarification concerning the provision of policing services and the future number of District Commands.

It was:-

RECOMMENDED:

- that the Chairman defer the Special Board meeting in relation to the 2008 Draft PSNI Estate Strategy to a later date;
- that the Board consider rearranging the meeting for a new date in 6 to 8 weeks time;
- that the Board should give consideration to visiting the Fermanagh area to view the stations being considered for closure.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next Corporate Policy, Planning and Performance Committee meeting was scheduled for Thursday, 12 March 2009 at 10:00am in Waterside Tower, Belfast.

(Meeting closed 4:50pm).

Secretariat

February 2009

Chairman