

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF THE 12TH MEETING OF FINANCE AND GENERAL
PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 21 JANUARY 2005 AT 9:30AM IN
WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST**

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

- Mr Sammy Wilson (Chairman)
- Mr Barry Gilligan (Vice-Chairman)
- (3) Professor Sir Desmond Rea
(Board Chairman)
- (1) Mr Alex Attwood
- (3) Mr J Byrne
- Mr Fred Cobain
- (3) Mr Brian Dougherty
- (3) Mr Sam Foster
- (3) Mr Willie Hay
- (2) Mr Alan McFarland
- Mrs Rosaleen Moore
- (3) Mr Ian Paisley Jnr

**PSNI REPRESENTATIVES IN
ATTENDANCE:**

- (3) Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief
Constable)
- (5) Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC
Urban Region)
- (6) Mr David Best (Director of Finance
& Support Services)
- (5) Head of Management Accounting
Two Regional Accountants
- (5) Superintendent (Road Safety
Development Branch)
- (4) Development Branch
Inspector (Road Safety
Development Branch)
- (4) Development Branch
Two PSNI Officials
- (6)

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- (3) Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief
Executive)
Director of Corporate Services
Director of Planning
Director of Communications
Six Board Officials

- (1) Item number – part item 3 – 14 part
- (2) Item number – part item 3 - 14
- (3) Item number 13 and 14 only
- (4) Item number 13 only
- (5) Item number 11 and 12 only
- (6) Item number 11 - 14 only

1. APOLOGIES

An apology for non-attendance was received from Viscount Brookeborough.

**2. MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES
COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 DECEMBER 2004**

The minutes of the meeting were agreed and signed.

**3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE FINANCE AND
GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 DECEMBER
2004**

3.1 Compensation Claims – Summary August And September 2004
(Item 3.9 Of Minutes Refers)

Members noted that PSNI would attend for Agenda item 13 to give a presentation on the Vehicle Recovery Scheme and answer any queries they might have.

The Committee noted a response received from the Deputy Chief Constable regarding the concerns that Members had in relation to Compensation Claims paid by PSNI including to PSNI staff.

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Members noted that the Crown Solicitor's Office had advised that it was not best practice to appoint a Barrister to deal with all claims lodged against PSNI as Barristers generally specialised in one specific field / area of litigation. It would therefore be of no benefit to the PSNI when it came to contesting multiple and diverse claims.

The Committee noted the response received from the Legal Adviser in relation to their query on a specific settlement and the precedent, which had been established in the case of *Livingstone v Rawyards Coal Company*.

It was agreed that an invitation would be sent to the PSNI Chief Health and Safety Adviser, to give a presentation to the Committee in the near future in order to update Members on the continuing development of his Health and Safety Strategy for PSNI.

It was also agreed that a report on the outcome of the Claims Management Committee meeting would be brought back to the May 2005 meeting.

3.2 Chairman's Business; Compensation Claims (Item 4.1 Of Minutes Refers)

Members noted that appropriate action had been taken.

3.3 PSNI Information And Communication Strategy (Item 7 Of Minutes Refers)

The Director of Corporate Services advised Members of the response the Board's Chairman had received from the Minister regarding PSNI funding in general and funding for the IS Strategy in particular.

The Committee urged officials to arrange the meeting and asked that they be kept updated on the outcome.

Members noted the information provided on the current status of the IS projects and funding details provided by PSNI.

3.4 PSNI Annual Estimates For Year Ending 31 March 2006 (Item 11 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that ACC McCausland would be in attendance at the meeting for Agenda item 12 – PSNI Overtime Monitoring, when he would address their queries.

Members also noted the paper provided by the Director of Finance and Support Services entitled “PSNI Overall Cost Comparison Information”.

3.5 Application For Removal Expenses As A Consequence Of An Officer Having To Move Home Under The SPED Scheme (Item 16 Of Minutes Refers)

Members noted that appropriate action had been taken.

3.6 SPED Move To Police Leased Accommodation (Item 17 Of Minutes Refers)

Members were advised that information required to produce a paper on how long police officers have resided in police accommodation had still not been received from PSNI. It was agreed that this matter would be an agenda item for the March meeting.

3.7 Application For Expenses Incurred As A Consequence Of An Officer Having To Move House Under The SPED Scheme (Item 18 Of Minutes Refers)

Members noted that appropriate action had been taken.

3.8 Press Issues (Item 23 Of Minutes Refers)

Members noted that appropriate action had been taken.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

Members noted a letter from the NIO concerning SR2004: Financial settlement for the NIPB.

It was agreed that details of NIPB cash releasing efficiency savings would be compiled in a paper to go before the Corporate Policy Committee.

5. LOSS OF LAND BY ADVERSE POSSESSION – PSNI STATION

Members considered the content of a paper advising of loss of land by adverse possession at a PSNI Station.

Since no evidence could be found to refute the claim Members agreed to the transfer of the title.

6. NIPB MANAGEMENT ACCOUNTS TO DECEMBER 2004

Members noted the information provided in the NIPB report on expenditure for the period to December 2004.

7. RATIFICATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR OCCASSIONAL AUTHORISATION FOR THE SALE OR CONSUMPTION OF INTOXICATING LIQUOR IN POLICE PREMISES

Members ratified a recent decision taken by officials of the Board in accordance with delegated authority.

8. GENERAL AUTHORISATION FOR THE SALE OR CONSUMPTION OF INTOXICATING LIQUOR

Members noted a paper seeking a decision in respect of applications from two police social and recreation clubs for exemptions under the licensing laws.

Members agreed that exemptions under Article 84 of the Licensing (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 and Article 51 of the Registrations of Clubs (Northern Ireland) Order 1996 for the twelve month period beginning 1 February 2005 for the two clubs specified.

9. COMPENSATION CLAIMS SUMMARY – NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER 2004

The Committee noted the information provided to them in relation to the financial settlements made during November and December 2004.

It was agreed to write to PSNI and stress that Members want continued monitoring of cases where compensation is paid out because a police officer does not attend court, is on sick leave or has inconsistencies in statements/notes and to monitor those officers who have multiple cases brought against them.

10. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

It was agreed that copies of the two questions for the Chief Constable arising out of the previous Finance and General Purposes meeting, concerning the PSNI IS funding and Compensation Claims would be circulated to Committee Members.

11. PSNI – QUARTERLY REPORT ON EXPENDITURE FOR THE PERIOD TO DECEMBER 2004

The Committee Chairman welcomed the Director of Finance and Support Services, Mr David Best, the Head of Management Accounting, Mr Michael Burton, ACC McCausland, ACC Urban Region and the two Regional Accountants to the meeting.

He also offered his sympathy and that of all Members of the Committee, to the Director of Finance and Support Services, on the death of a member of PSNI Finance Branch who had recently passed away.

ACC McCausland introduced the newly appointed regional accountants to the Committee.

Members noted an updated paper, which was circulated to the Committee, detailing information on PSNI expenditure for the period to December 2004.

12. PSNI OVERTIME MONITORING

The Director of Finance and Support Services opened the presentation on PSNI Overtime Monitoring by outlining the process for allocating overtime and the outcome of 2004/05, the trend of total overtime between 1996/97 and 2004/05 and a comparison of overtime levels with a selection of eight other GB Forces.

ACC McCausland then dealt with overtime from an operational policing perspective.

In drawing comparisons with other GB Forces, Members were advised that the information would have to be read in conjunction with the unique circumstances within which the PSNI operate and which other Forces are not subject to, namely the Northern Ireland security situation, patrolling patterns, parades, Army support and VIP escorts.

Members noted a pie chart depicting a regional overtime activity analysis and requested a similar diagram for “normal” police duties performed by other Forces in the UK.

They also requested figures for the number of Constables and Sergeants availing of overtime in both PSNI and the eight other Forces used for comparison purposes.

Members noted that by 30 September 2004 PSNI had exceeded HMIC’s overtime reduction target of 10% by achieving a reduction of 11.4%.

Other measures taken to reduce overtime expenditure are as follows:

- The change from operating 3 shifts to 2 shifts
- The civilianisation of Station Duty Officer and Assistant Station Duty Officer posts

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- The consideration of single officer vehicle patrolling with a pilot currently running in one DCU
- Further consideration is being given to officers attending court on rest days and for adjournments i.e. not to be called as witnesses on rest days
- Prisoner movements have been transferred to the Northern Ireland Prison Service
- Civilian guards now perform Court security

ACC McCausland also advised Members that recorded crime had reduced and clearance rates were increasing.

Members had the opportunity to address their own concerns to the presenters and seek clarification on particular issues.

The Chairman thanked ACC McCausland, Mr Burton and the regional accountants and they left the meeting.

13. PRESENTATION – PSNI VEHICLE RECOVERY SCHEME

The Committee Chairman welcomed Superintendent Hamill and his colleague to the meeting for their presentation on PSNI Vehicle Recovery.

This agenda item had been opened to all Members.

The reasons why PSNI require a vehicle recovery service were highlighted to Members and a background history of the system that had previously been in place was given.

The reasons for the change were given as:

- Reputable operators preference
- No formal contract
- Administrative burden
- Health and Safety Executive concerns
- Discrimination
- Cost to Police Authority/ Chief Constable
- Aware of progress in other Forces
- Police are not recovery experts
- Requirement for an equitable transport scheme

The tendering process and the tender specification were explained to Members in detail.

The benefits of the new scheme will be reduced costs, enhanced service, standardised charges and both improved facilities for vehicle examination and Health and Safety standards.

Members then asked questions on the various issues arising from the presentation.

It was agreed that PSNI would send a written response to the following queries:

- Are recovery times quicker?
- Has the issue of favouritism being resolved?
- Following the 3 month 'honeymoon period' how many operators still did not meet the Scheme's requirement and if they still fall short of the required standard what happens?
- Do all contractors have heavy lifting gear – who and where are the operators who can provide a full service?

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- Are PSNI satisfied that GRG are answering calls – has a proper analysis been done of their response for assistance?
- Is it true that there is reluctance on the part of operators to go into certain areas at night?
- ETA's – PSNI to provide a chart to show the effectiveness in terms of ETA at scenes as opposed to the old system.
- PSNI to investigate if firms who have not signed a contract with GRG are still operating while others who did not reach the standard have been suspended.

The Chairman thanked both presenters and they left the meeting.

14. ESTATE STRATEGY

The Chairman welcomed DCC Leighton to the meeting to give a presentation on PSNI Estate Strategy.

This agenda item had been opened to all Members.

Members noted the information provided in a draft confidential document entitled "Estate Strategy".

Members discussed various aspects of the document and it was agreed that PSNI would amend the draft in line with several suggestions put forward by Members. The document would be brought back to the Board in the near future for formal approval.

The Committee Chairman thanked DCC Leighton and his team for their input and they left the meeting.

15. PRESS ISSUES

It was agreed that a news release entitled "Policing Board Considers Future of Police Stations" would be released following the meeting.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The following items were raised under any other business.

16.1 Matter Arising From August Meeting – Application For Removal Expenses Under The SPED Scheme (Item 3.2 Of Previous Minutes Refers)

Members were advised that PSNI have been requested to provide for the March meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee a timetable in relation to the tendering for additional Removal Companies.

16.2 Matter Arising From October Meeting – Presentation – PSNI Information And Communication Strategy (Item 6 Of Minutes Refers)

It was agreed to arrange the 'open day' visit to PSNI, which is hoped will show Members the progress being made by them on their Information and Communication Strategy, for March 2005.

16.3 Matter Arising From October Meeting – Presentation – Application For Payment Of Tax Liability – D/Inspector ADM4 (Item 20 Of Minutes Refers)

Members were advised that no response as yet has been received from the Inland Revenue, in respect of the payment of tax liabilities arising from officers who have had to move house under the SPED Scheme.

It was agreed that officials would monitor the situation and keep Committee Members updated.

16.4 Sale Of Former Police Station – Queen Street, Belfast

The Committee considered a letter received from Estate Services Business Unit in respect of the sale of a former police station.

Two Members signed the Conveyance on behalf of the Board.

16.5 Purchase Of Steeple Barracks From the MOD

The Committee considered a letter received from Estate Services Business Unit in respect of the purchase of Steeple Barracks from the MOD.

Two Members signed the deed of ratification on behalf of the Board.

16.6 PSNI – Outcome Of The 2004/05 December In-Year Monitoring Round

Members noted a paper, advising Members of the outcome of the PSNI bid for additional funding relating to the 2004/05 Main Police Grant and Patten Non-Severance.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was arranged for 18 March 2005 at 9:30am.

(Meeting closed 1:30 pm).

Secretariat

January 2005

CHAIRMAN