

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE 53rd MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 1 MARCH 2006 AT 10:00 AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

- Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
- (5) Mr Denis Bradley (Vice Chairman)
- (2) Mr Alex Attwood
Mr Joe Byrne
- (3) Mr Fred Cobain
Mr Brian Dougherty
- (7) Mr Sam Foster
Mr Barry Gilligan
- (4) Mr Tom Kelly
Mrs Pauline McCabe
- (9) Mr Alan McFarland
- (1) Mr Eddie McGrady
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
- (6) Mr Ian Paisley
- (8) Mr Suneil Sharma
Mr Sammy Wilson

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- (10) Sir Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
- (10) Mr Duncan McCausland (ACC Urban Region)
- (10) Mr Roy Toner (ACC Operational Support)
- (10) Mr Joe Stewart (Director of Human Resources)
- (10) Ms Sinead McSweeney, Director of Media and PR
- (10) C/Superintendent, Craigavon DCU
- (10) C/Superintendent, Crime Operations Department
- (10) C/Superintendent, Rural Region
- (10) Chief Inspector, Command Secretariat

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

- Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
- Mr David Jackson (Director of Community Affairs)
- (11) Mr David Wilson (Director of Planning)
- (11) Mrs Sinead Simpson (Director of Policy)
- Two Board Officials

- (1) Item number 3.7 to part item 15.2
- (2) Item number 6.2 to close
- (3) Item number 10 to close
- (4) Item number 1 to 10 only
- (5) Except item numbers, 10, 11, 13 and part item 15.2
- (6) Except item numbers 10 and 11
- (7) Except part item number 15.2
- (8) Item numbers 1 to 9.3
- (9) Item number 3.7 to close, except items 10 and 11
- (10) Item number 12 only
- (11) Except item 15.2

1. APOLOGIES, ETC

Apologies for non attendance were received from Viscount Brookeborough and Mr Hay. NOTED.

2. MINUTES OF MEETINGS OF THE POLICING BOARD

Minutes Of The 51st Meeting Of The Policing Board Held On 2 February 2006

It was:

RESOLVED

That the draft minutes of the 51st Board meeting held on 2 February 2006 be approved.

2.2 Minutes Of The Policing Board Meeting In Public Held On 2 February 2006

It was:

RESOLVED

That the draft minutes of the Board meeting in public held on 2 February 2006 be approved.

2.3 Minutes Of The Board Meeting Held On 23 February 2006

It was:

RESOLVED

That the draft minutes of the Board meeting held on 23 February 2006 be approved.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF THE POLICING BOARD MEETINGS

3.1 Community Restorative Justice (Item 3.2 Of Minutes Refers)

This matter was dealt with under item 15.1.

3.2 New Police Training College (Item 3.4 Of Minutes Refers)

This matter was dealt with at item 9.2.

3.3 Recruitment Of Assistant Chief Constable (Item 3.7 Of Minutes Refers)

The appointment panel to recruit an ACC met on 23 February 2006 and considered the 4 applicants shortlisted for the post. There were 2 applicants from PSNI, 1 applicant from Scotland and 1 applicant from England. NOTED.

Chief Superintendent Drew Harris, DCU Commander Craigavon, was judged by the panel to be the top candidate at interview. Superintendent Alistair Finlay from Strathclyde Police was judged to be second and has been placed on a 6 month shortlist, should an additional vacancy arise. NOTED.

3.4 First Meeting Of The Organised Crime Stakeholder Group (Item 6.5 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chairman informed Members that he had attended the Organised Crime Stakeholder Group meeting on 7 February 2006 and outlined the main areas of discussion. NOTED.

3.5 Statistics On Complaints Against Part-Time Reserve Officers And Full-Time Reserve Officers – Human Rights Implications (Item 10.1 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chairman referred to discussion at the February 2006 Board meeting when a Member queried the action of the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee in seeking a break down of statistics on complaints made against PSNI officers into those against Part-Time Reserve officers and those against Full-Time Reserve officers.

The Board considered a paper prepared by Board officials relating to concerns that the human rights of Part-Time Reserve officers and Full-Time Reserve officers may have been violated.

It was:

AGREED

That the Board should seek further advice on the matter from the Crown Solicitor's Office.

3.6 Presentation By PSNI Internal Investigations Branch (Item 10.3.1 Of Minutes Refers)

The Chairman reminded the Board that a Member had asked for further information in respect of statistics given to the Board concerning a reference to "125 investigating officers appointed".

Officials advised that a letter clarifying the information had been forwarded to the Member who raised the query. NOTED.

It was:

AGREED

That the letter issued to the Member concerned should be circulated to all Board Members.

3.7 Presentation On Taser (Item 10.4.1 Of Minutes Refers)

Officials advised Members that discussions were continuing with PSNI regarding the organisation of a public information meeting on Taser. NOTED.

3.8 Future Of Part-Time Policing (Item 11 Of Minutes Refers)

A Member requested information concerning the length of time that would be required to carry out the scoping study prior to the rolling out of 4 new areas of recruitment in respect of Police Officer Part-Time (POPT). Officials advised that it was anticipated information in this regard would be received at the POPT Sub-Group meeting scheduled for 8 March 2006. NOTED.

4. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS

4.1 Engagements

The Chairman advised Members that he had undertaken the following engagements on behalf of the Board:-

- meeting with North and West Belfast Parades and Cultural Forum – 16 February 2006.
- RUC George Cross Widows' Association 25th Anniversary Dinner – Belfast City Hall – 17 February 2006. NOTED.

4.2 Publications

The Chairman advised that the following publications had been placed in the library:-

- Service Authority for National Crime Squad Annual Report for the year ended 31 March 2005.
- Service Plan for National Crime Squad Service Authority – 2005/06.
- National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) Annual Report 2004/05.
- Service Plan for the NCIS Service Authority – 2005/06. NOTED.

4.3 Correspondence

The Chairman informed Members that he had received the following correspondence:-

- letter from the Police Ombudsman dated 8 February 2006 regarding the discharge of CS Incapacitant Spray.
- letter from NIO dated 14 February 2006 regarding Policing Plan 2006 - 2009.

- letter from the Secretary of State dated 28 February 2006 regarding the reconstitution of the Board.
- a report dated January 2006 from the Impartial Assessors to the Policing Board regarding the Appointment of Independent Members to Northern Ireland District Policing Partnerships. NOTED.

It was:

AGREED

That a copy of the report of the Impartial Assessors should be circulated to each Board Member and that the Community Involvement Committee should consider the recommendations contained in the report.

4.4 News Releases

The Chairman highlighted the following news releases:-

- Update on Crime Operations Reforms – Policing Board – 16 February 2006.
- Majority of victims and those who call on police are satisfied with response – Policing Board – 21 February 2006. NOTED.

5. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S BUSINESS

5.1 Conferences, Etc

The Chief Executive informed Members that invitations had been received for Members to attend the following conferences.

- International Peace Building Conference – “A Good Place To Live” – Exploring Peace in Post Conflict Societies – 8/9 March 2006 – Enniskillen.

- Conflict Resolution Training – INCORE International Summer School, University of Ulster, Magee Campus – 12 – 16 June 2006.

Any Members interested in attending were asked to contact Secretariat. NOTED.

5.2 Parades Commission

A letter from Mr Roger Poole, Chairman of the Parades Commission dated 2 March 2006, regarding its intentions for consultation in future months was tabled for information. This letter will be considered by the Human Rights and Professional Standards Committee. NOTED.

6. CORPORATE POLICY COMMITTEE MEETING

6.1 Minutes Of The 52nd Corporate Policy Committee Meeting Held On 16 February 2006

It was:

RESOLVED

To adopt the draft minutes of the 52nd meeting of the Corporate Policy Committee on 16 February 2006.

6.1.1 Conference – Democratic Dialogue (Item 19.1 Of Minutes Refers)

A Member referred to a project being set up by Democratic Dialogue to consider crime and justice issues. The Member highlighted that papers for the conference indicated that a number of named Board Members had been invited to attend the event. Members discussed the conference agenda, programme and invitees.

It was:

AGREED

That officials should obtain further information about the conference and inform Corporate Policy Committee accordingly.

6.2 Reconstitution Of The Board – Administrative Arrangements

The Board considered a paper containing recommendations from the Corporate Policy Committee in respect of future administrative arrangements necessary in preparation for the reconstitution of the Board in April 2006.

It was:

RESOLVED

To approve:

- terms of appointment for the Chairman and Vice-Chairman.
- the delegation of authority to the Chief Executive during the period 1 April 2006 until the election of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Board in respect of urgent matters.
- the development of the concept of Lead Members on designated key issues or areas of work.

The Chief Executive advised that a detailed paper on implementation, initially on a limited range of issues, which could be expanded in due course, would be presented to the new Board. NOTED.

7. AUDIT AND RISK MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

7.1 Minutes Of The 2nd Meeting Of The Audit And Risk Management Committee Held On 26 January 2006

It was:

RESOLVED

To adopt the draft minutes of the 2nd meeting of the Audit and Risk Management Committee on 26 January 2006.

8. COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING

8.1 Minutes Of The 26th Meeting Of The Community Involvement Committee Held On 8 February 2006

It was:

RESOLVED

To adopt the draft minutes of the 26th meeting of the Community Involvement Committee on 8 February 2006.

8.1.1 Launch Of Reports (Item 4.1 Of Minutes Refers)

Mr Dougherty confirmed that he had attended the launch of reports on:-

- Policing, Accountability and the Black and Minority Ethnic Communities in Northern Ireland;
- Policing, Accountability and the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Communities in Northern Ireland;

on 22 February 2006 and outlined the main points arising. NOTED.

9. FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE MEETING

9.1 Minutes Of The 18th Meeting Of The Finance and General Purposes Committee Held On 17 February 2006

It was:

RESOLVED

To adopt the draft minutes of the 18th meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee on 17 February 2006.

9.1.1 Use Of Former Police Sites (Item 3.4 Of Minutes Refers)

A Member referred to an Information Paper provided to the Committee on usage of sites vacated by PSNI over the last 3 years. The Member referred to the work of contractors being inhibited at the former Rosslea police station. Officials undertook to obtain further information regarding the situation and to advise the Member accordingly.

9.2 Police Resources

The Committee considered a paper which drew attention to the details of a letter to the Chairman of the Board from the NIO in relation to police resources. The letter had been presented to the Finance and General Purposes Committee at its February 2006 meeting. It covered a number of broad areas relating to the short to medium term financing of the PSNI, including:-

- budget allocations.
- Comprehensive Spending Review.
- future options.
- police college.
- briefing to the Board by NIO on finance issues.

The Chairman of the Finance and General Purposes Committee outlined the main concerns/points raised during Committee discussion:-

- that the anticipated funding gap in 2006/07 and 2007/08 had been addressed but that the funding situation from 2008/09 is very uncertain.
 - the commencement of the comprehensive spending review 2007 and the Terms of Reference for the proposed Value for Money study.
 - that the draft Northern Ireland Bill would contain provisions for the introduction of a “Policing Precept”.
 - that further action needed to be taken in order to secure full funding for the new police college.
 - that the Finance and General Purposes Committee had welcomed the offer of NIO officials attending the Committee to discuss funding issues and that a request by the Chief Constable to meet with the Board to discuss the funding gap from 2008/09 onwards should be accepted.
- NOTED.

Following discussion, it was:-

AGREED

- that all Members of the Board should be invited to attend the briefing offered by NIO officials.
- that further information should be sought on the amount that was likely to be raised via a Policing Precept.
- that officials should write to NIO along the lines set out in the paper considered by Members.
- that a meeting should be requested with the Prime Minister to secure full funding for the police college.
- that the Board should write to the Chief Constable regarding the funding issues raised in the NIO letter.

9.3 PSNI - Annual Budget Plan For The Year Ending 31 March 2007

The Board considered the Annual Budget Plan for the PSNI for year ending 31 March 2007.

It was:-

RESOLVED

To approve the Annual Budget Plan for PSNI for the year ending 31 March 2007.

10. HUMAN RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETINGS

10.1 Minutes Of The 55th Human Resources Committee Held On 27 January 2006

It was:

RESOLVED

To adopt the minutes of the 55th meeting of the Human Resources Committee on 27 January 2006.

10.2 Minutes Of The 56th Meeting (Quorum) Of The Human Resources Committee Held On 27 January 2006

It was:

RESOLVED

To adopt the minutes of the 56th (Quorum) meeting of the Human Resources Committee on 27 January 2006.

11. ANALYSIS OF NIO DISCUSSION PAPER ON DEVOLVING POLICING AND JUSTICE IN NORTHERN IRELAND

The Board considered a paper which identified the key issues within a recent NIO discussion document on Devolving Policing and Justice in Northern Ireland. The paper focused particularly on those issues which were likely to impact on the role and work of the Policing Board. A full copy of the NIO discussion document had been circulated to all Members prior to the meeting.

During discussion of the paper Members highlighted the need to ensure that the powers of the Board should not be diminished under any new arrangements.

It was:

AGREED

That a further discussion paper should be prepared and presented to the reconstituted Board at an early opportunity.

12. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

The meeting discussed questions to be put to the Chief Constable and decided whether they should be asked at the Board meeting in public or in the private session.

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Constable and other PSNI representatives to the meeting.

The Board received further information concerning:-

- the PSNI response to the remarks of a judge in a case taken against a PSNI officer who was prosecuted for retaining additional ammunition.
- an update on the investigation into the break in at Castlereagh police station in March 2002.

- a briefing given to the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland by the Chief Constable.
- a breakdown of criminal convictions by PSNI officers. During discussion, the Deputy Chief Constable confirmed that he would provide the statistics he had given in writing to the Board.
- the progress of the review of the APR (individual performance appraisal) scheme.
- the planned review of the roll and contribution of District Command based Personnel Officers.
- the circumstances under which PSNI would intervene in sporting events where there was disorder by participants in the game.
- press speculation concerning MI5 intelligence on a possible bomb attack before the Omagh bomb.

The Board moved into its meeting in public and following this session the PSNI representatives left the meeting.

13. INFORMATION PAPERS

13.1 Media Strategy

The Board considered a paper which outlined the Media Strategy that had been developed to position the work of the Board during its first term of office. NOTED.

A Member referred to a programme of meetings with key influencers in Washington during St Patrick's week. A number of Members indicated that it would have been advantageous if the Washington visit had been open to all Members to take part in, rather than a representative from each political party and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman. NOTED

14. PRESS ISSUES

There were no matters arising.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

15.1 Community Based Restorative Justice

The Chairman referred Members to the discussion at the special Board meeting on 23 February 2006 at which it was agreed that officials should prepare a draft response to Government detailing the Board's views. He referred Members to the draft response that had been tabled at the commencement of the meeting.

The Board considered the draft response paragraph by paragraph and agreed a number of amendments which were noted by officials.

It was:

RESOLVED

That subject to the amendment of the draft response as discussed, that it should be forwarded to the NIO by the Chairman.

It was:

AGREED

That a copy of the final response should be forwarded to all Board Members.

16. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Board confirmed the date of the next meeting for Tuesday, 28 March 2006.

(Meeting closed 4:00pm).

Secretariat
March 2006

CHAIRMAN