

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE 48th MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD AT 4:30PM ON MONDAY, 24 OCTOBER 2005 IN WATERSIDE TOWER

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Professor Sir Desmond Rea (Chairman)
Mr Alex Attwood
Mr Joe Byrne
Mr Sam Foster
Mr Barry Gilligan
Mr Tom Kelly
Mrs Pauline McCabe
Mrs Rosaleen Moore
(1) Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
(1) Mr Sammy Wilson

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

Sir Hugh Orde (Chief Constable)
Mr Paul Leighton (Deputy Chief Constable)
Mr Sam Kinkaid (ACC Crime Operations)

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Trevor Reaney (Chief Executive)
Mr Sam Hagen (Director of Corporate Services)
Two Board Officials

(1) Part item number 2

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for non attendance were received from Mr Bradley, Viscount Brookeborough and Mr Dougherty,

2. NISMW – v – PSNI

The Chairman welcomed the Chief Constable, Deputy Chief Constable and ACC Crime Operations to the meeting.

The Chairman reminded Members of a briefing by the Chief Constable at the Corporate Policy Committee meeting on 20 October 2005 concerning the civil case of Northern Ireland Sheet Metal Works Limited – v – PSNI. He reminded Members of the legal advice viz. that this was an operational matter and that the Board's role is confined to holding the Chief Constable to account after the event. He also reminded Members of the discussion concerning the appointment of a Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) to the criminal case.

The Chairman advised Members that subsequent to the Committee meeting, he had been contacted by the Chief Constable regarding the appointment of the SIO. In the light of the new information provided by PSNI, the Chairman had called a special meeting of the Board to receive a further briefing from the Chief Constable on the arrangements to investigate the case.

The Chairman invited the Chief Constable to update the meeting.

The Chief Constable reminded Members that following receipt of the judgement PSNI had decided to initiate a criminal investigation, and an administrative investigation to review procurement procedures and practice.

The Chief Constable advised Members of the outcome of the discussion between ACC Crime Operations and the independent expert in criminal fraud referred to at the previous briefing.

ACC Crime Operations detailed the model that could be followed by PSNI to carry out the criminal investigation and to quality assure and oversee the investigation. He described the tension between establishing as independent an investigation as possible and the need to provide local knowledge/competency. He also explained the pros and cons and the administrative procedures associated with seconding officers from other police forces and the length of time this might take.

The Deputy Chief Constable outlined some of the issues which the administrative review of the procurement process would seek to investigate and emphasised the need for the administrative review to dovetail with the criminal investigation, the criminal investigation would be given primacy.

Members discussed the procedure to appoint outside consultants to carry out the administrative review and the remit that the review would be likely to be given. It was recognised that this would be influenced by the criminal investigation.

ACC Crime Operations referred to the responsibilities and liabilities of the Board in respect of contracts agreed by the former Police Authority for Northern Ireland.

The Board discussed the proposed arrangements for the appointment of a SIO and the Board's involvement in monitoring the progress of the investigation.

The Chairman summarised the current position regarding the case as follows:-

- The Board would take further legal advice, if required, to ensure it acted in accordance with the law in holding the Chief Constable to account.
- The SIO will be appointed from PSNI Crime Operations Department and an external appointee with appropriate fraud investigation experience will be appointed to quality assure the process.
- The external appointee will be available to brief the Board on any issues arising from the investigation.
- Five Members of the Board, one from each political party together with the Chairman and Vice Chairman will form an independent advisory group and receive regular progress reports on the criminal investigation.
- An administrative review of current PSNI procurement procedures will be undertaken by independent consultants.

- A Joint Project Board (NIPB/PSNI) will be established in relation to the administrative review of procurement processes.
- A briefing will be given to a future Board meeting on the current PSNI procurement policy and procedures.

The Chairman thanked the Chief Constable and his colleagues for the briefing.

3. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

There were no matters arising.

(Meeting closed 5:50pm).

Secretariat
October 2005

Chairman