

## **NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

### **PRESS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE**

#### **MINUTES OF THE 2nd MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY, 9 OCTOBER 2003 AT 2.00 PM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST**

##### **PRESENT:**

##### **MEMBERS:**

- (1)** Mr Tom Kelly (Chairman)
- (2)** Mr Suneil Sharma (Vice-Chairman)  
Mr Joe Byrne  
Mr Brian Dougherty
- (1)** Mr Ian Paisley Jnr
- (3)** Professor Desmond Rea (Chairman of  
the Board)

##### **POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:**

- (4)** ACC Roy Toner
- (4)** Director of Information Management
- (4)** Two representatives from PSNI
- (5)** Director of Media and Public Relations
- (5)** Deputy Director of Media and Public  
Relations
- (5)** One PSNI Officer

##### **OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:**

- Head of Policy and Accountability
- (6)** Communications Manager
- (6)** One Board Official

- (1)** From part of item number 2 onwards
- (2)** From part of item number 4.2 onwards
- (3)** Item numbers 1 – 5
- (4)** Item numbers 1 – 5
- (5)** Item number 5

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee, the Chairman of the Board took the chair until the Chairman joined the meeting.

#### **1. APOLOGIES ETC**

No apologies were received.

## **2. PRESENTATION ON PSNI TRANSPARENCY POLICY**

The Chairman welcomed Assistant Chief Constable Toner and his colleagues to the meeting and invited them to address the Committee on the PSNI Transparency Policy.

The Director of Information Management gave a presentation regarding the implementation of the PSNI Transparency Policy. A copy of the slides which were used during the presentation is attached at "Annex A".

During a subsequent discussion Members congratulated the representatives from PSNI on the work which they had carried out in relation to taking the transparency policy forward. The following issues were covered during the discussion:-

- The Chief Constable's report for 2002 – 2003 which was published as a supplement in the three Belfast newspapers.
- The new public affairs bulletin entitled "Dispatch" which is circulated to opinion formers.
- An audit which would be carried out by the Assistant Information Commissioner.
- The work which would be undertaken by the PSNI in relation to records management.
- The information which is contained in the PSNI Publication Scheme.
- The legal obligation under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 to give members of the public a general right of access to all types of recorded information that an Organisation holds, with certain exceptions.
- PSNI Crime Statistics which are contained on the Police Service's website and proposals to have a breakdown of statistics within each DCU also available.

At this point the Chairman thanked ACC Toner and his colleagues for the presentation and the representatives from PSNI then left the meeting.

### 3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE HELD ON 12 JUNE 2003

The minutes of the meeting were agreed and signed.

### 4. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES

#### 4.1 Press And PR Resources – BDS Review (Item 5.1 Of Minutes Refers)

With the exception of the Head of Policy and Accountability, all officials left the meeting.

The Committee was updated in relation to the appointment of a Director of Communications.

Members noted that the appointment panel had decided not to make an appointment and discussion took place on what arrangements could be put in place to meet the short term difficulty which would arise until the post could be re-advertised and filled.

It was agreed that to provide support to the Policing Board Communications Manager and Press Office, a short term (12 month) contract should be offered to the current temporary incumbent with effect from 1 November 2003, provided a commitment to a minimum period of 6 months was secured.

Members also asked that action be taken to recommence the appointment process for a Communications Director and suggested that **(b)(1)**....., should be involved in the process.

The other Officials rejoined the meeting.

The Committee noted that a number of applications had been received for the positions of Press Officers in the Board's Press and Public Relations Department. The selection process for the posts would commence during the following week.

**4.2 Reception To Officially Open The New Press Room** (Item 7 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that the hosting of a media reception to officially open the new Press Room in Waterside Tower had been deferred until the new Communications Director was appointed.

**4.3 Public Relations, Design And Printing And Advertising Contract** (Item 8 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that the Board had to ensure that proper procurement procedures were being operated in relation to the awarding of the public relations, design, printing and advertising contract and that the Northern Ireland Audit Office had been critical of the Board for not putting a permanent contract in place.

Members noted that Officials would draw up proposals in relation to the awarding of the contracts and bring these to the Committee for consideration.

**4.4 DPP Interim Communications Strategy** (Item 15.1 Of Minutes Refers)

The Committee noted that media training for District Policing Partnership Managers would be taken forward in due course.

**5. PRESENTATION REGARDING PROMOTION OF DPPS**

Officials explained that this presentation had been cancelled.

**6. PRESENTATION ON THE MANAGEMENT OF CHANGE IN RELATION TO COMMUNICATIONS, MARKETING AND IMAGE**

The Chairman welcomed the Director of Media and Public Relations and his colleagues to the meeting and invited them to address the Committee on the management of change in relation to communications, marketing and image.

The Director gave a presentation during which he gave a flavour of some of the major press and public relations issues which PSNI Media and Public Relations Department had handled recently. He drew the Committee's attention to the Department's communications strategy and highlighted details of events which the Media Department had been involved in during that day.

During a subsequent discussion, the following issues were covered:-

- The desirability of joint initiatives between the Board and the PSNI.
- Interviews being given to the media by Police Officers of all ranks.
- The publication of the Chief Constable's report for 2002 – 2003 as a supplement in the three Belfast newspapers and proposals to extend its circulation to other newspapers in the future.
- The circulation of Policing Plans in weekly newspapers throughout the Province.
- The role of the PSNI's newly appointed Public Affairs Officer.
- The good working relationships which the PSNI Media Department had with the Board's Media and Public Relations Department.
- The evaluation of the work which is carried out by the Media and Public Relations Department.
- The graduated media response which dictated whether the issue was dealt with at a local level or by the Headquarters Media and Public Relations Department.

At this point, the Chairman thanked the Director of Media and Public Relations and his colleagues for the presentation. The Director extended an invitation to the Committee to visit the PSNI Media Department for their next meeting. The representatives from PSNI then left the meeting.

## **7. CHAIRMAN'S BUSINESS**

The Chairman had no matters to draw to the Committee's attention.

## **8. MATTERS TO BE RAISED WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE AT THE NEXT BOARD MEETING**

The Committee agreed that they had no matters to raise with the Chief Constable at the next Board meeting.

## **9. PRESS ISSUES**

The Committee agreed that they had no matters to raise with the press arising from the meeting.

## **10. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

### **10.1 Media Relations And Events Schedule**

The Committee noted details of a schedule which outlined details of forthcoming events for the period October to December 2003.

### **10.2 Public Meetings**

The Committee discussed the format of Public Meetings of the Board and suggested that themed presentations should be given at future meetings. They asked Officials to provide the Committee with proposals on the issue for the next meeting.

The Committee discussed the location of Board meetings and noted that it was planned to hold three meetings outside Belfast during the following year.

The Committee discussed holding a Board meeting in Omagh or Strabane to demonstrate support for DPP Members in that area. Following discussion Members agreed that the December meeting of the Board should be held in Omagh.

### **10.3 Threats To DPP Members**

The Committee noted details of the support which the Chairman of the Board had given to Members of DPPs following recent security threats against them.

### **11. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The Committee agreed that the next meeting would be held in the PSNI Media and Public Relations Department on 11 December 2003 at 2.00pm.

The Committee agreed that the media reception to officially open the new Press Room in Waterside Tower should be linked with the Board's Christmas Reception which would be held on 3 December 2003.

(Meeting closed at 3.40 pm).