

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE RESOURCES AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE HELD ON 19 AUGUST AT 10:00AM IN WATERSIDE TOWER, BELFAST

PRESENT:

MEMBERS:

Mr Jonathan Craig (Chairperson)
Mr Stuart MacDonnell (Vice Chairperson)
Mr Michael Wardlow

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

- (1)** Mr David Best, Director of Finance & Support Services
- (1)** Mr Paul Ballentine, A/Head of Financial Management Services

OFFICIALS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Edgar Jardine (Interim Chief Executive)
Dr Debbie Donnelly (Deputy Chief Executive)
6 Board Officials

(1) Item number 6 only

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received on behalf of Mrs Anne Connolly, Mr Robin Newton and Mr Brian Rowntree. NOTED.

No conflicts of interest arising from the agenda were declared by Members.

2. MINUTES OF THE RESOURCES AND IMPROVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2011

The Committee noted the minutes of the Committee meeting held on 25 March 2011, which had been approved by the Board on 7 April 2011.

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MEETING HELD ON 25 MARCH 2011

There were no matters arising.

4. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

4.1 PSNI Estates Steering Committee Meeting Held On 8 July 2011

The Chairperson reported on his attendance at the PSNI Estates Steering Committee on 8 July 2011.

5. FIRST DAY BRIEF AND DRAFT PROGRAMME OF WORK 2011/12

Members considered a paper which outlined the role of the Committee and highlighted 5 distinct areas of business – Continuous Improvement; Finance; PSNI Information Systems Strategy; PSNI Estate Strategy; and other ad hoc items.

Members and officials discussed a number of aspects of the Committee's work.

Members noted the Committee's responsibilities in relation to claims of employers liability or public liability taken against the Chief Constable in excess of £100k.

It was:-

AGREED:

- To continue previous practice of the Scheme of Delegation in cases over £100k;
- That 3 independent Members of Committee be nominated to undertake this task – Mr MacDonnell, Mr Wardlow and Mrs Connolly.

The Committee discussed its responsibilities in relation to the Police Property Fund.

It was:

AGREED:

That officials would bring a paper to a future meeting setting out the policy and procedure for allocating payments from the Fund for charitable purposes having first considered the views of PSNI.

6. PSNI REPORT ON EXPENDITURE TO JULY 2011

The Committee considered a paper which provided an update in relation to various PSNI financial issues.

Members discussed the role of the Committee in fulfilling the Board's financial monitoring requirements as set out in the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000 and in the PSNI Management Statement and Financial Memorandum.

Members discussed the need for the Committee to find an appropriate mechanism to identify strategic issues within the PSNI budget at an early stage and to use the Board's limited resources to optimum effect.

The Committee discussed the Board's role in the oversight of PSNI business cases and the Board's priorities in providing reassurance of the strategic context of the case, particularly its alignment with the Policing Plan and its relevance to previously agreed strategies.

It was:-

AGREED:

That officials should provide a paper setting out a forward programme of business cases and proposals for a methodology for the Board to process such cases.

Members discussed the role of the Department of Justice (DOJ) and the Board's relationship with the DOJ in progressing PSNI business cases.

It was:-

AGREED:

- That officials should clarify the Board/DOJ roles in relation to PSNI business cases;
- Following discussion with DOJ, officials should provide the Committee with a paper on proposals for taking forward PSNI business cases.

The Committee noted that approximately 75% of the police budget related to salaries and pensions and acknowledged the link between the PSNI plans for efficiency and the programme of workforce modernisation.

Members expressed concern about future PSNI pensions liability and, it was:-

AGREED:

- That the Committee should consider pensions liability at its next meeting;
- That PSNI pensions liability should be added to the Programme of Work for September 2011.

The Chairperson welcomed the PSNI Director of Finance and Support Services and his colleague to the meeting.

The Committee noted the details of various PSNI financial issues:

	Actual £k	Budget £k	Variance £k
Staff Costs	180,844	181,911	1,067
Non Staff Costs	46,369	50,506	4,137
Historical Enquiries Team	1,854	2,167	313
Receipts	(1,966)	(1,686)	280
Profit/loss on disposal	(567)	0	567
Cash Payment of Provisions	40,006	26,119	(13,887)
Profit/loss on disposal	9,361	10,647	1,285
Pension Curtailments	2,177	0	(2,177)
Total Resource DEL	278,078	269,664	(8,414)

NOTED.

The PSNI representatives highlighted a number of aspects of the Resource Budgeting Management (RBM) return, commenting on significant variance from the budget.

Members highlighted the current variance on overtime and sought further clarification concerning budget profiling for the summer months, the impact of the security situation on overtime and budget forecasts for the final year's spend on overtime. The PSNI representatives advised that they would be in a better position to predict end year pressures and spend by October/November 2011.

Members discussed the increase in provision for injury on duty awards and the impact of a change in accounting policy on the budget provision by all police forces. Members also discussed expenditure on transport costs and provision for spending on hearing loss claims.

The Chairperson thanked the PSNI representatives for their contribution and they left the meeting.

It was:-

AGREED:

That officials should arrange for the Committee to receive a briefing on hearing loss compensation claims at a future meeting.

7. KPMG EVALUATION OF PSNI EFFICIENCY PLAN

The Committee considered an Executive Summary of a KPMG early review of the PSNI 4 Year Efficiency Plan. NOTED.

It was:-

AGREED:

- That the full KPMG Evaluation Report should be forwarded to all Members in due course.
- That PSNI to provide a full briefing on the 4 year efficiency plans at the October meeting.

8. NIPB REPORT ON EXPENDITURE TO JULY 2011

The Committee considered a paper which provided an update in relation to the Board's Management Accounts. NOTED.

9. NIPB SUBMISSION FOR THE OCTOBER 2011 IN-YEAR MONITORING ROUND

The Committee considered a paper which gave details in relation to the Board's submission for the October 2011 Monitoring Round. The monitoring exercise showed a total saving of £225k. The main savings were – Non Staff Costs (£130k); DPP Budgets (£155k) and Salaries (£140k).

It was:-

RESOLVED:

To approve the Board's In Year Monitoring Round for submission to the Department of Justice.

10. NIPB YEAR END FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Committee considered the signed 2010/11 Year End Financial Statements section of the Annual Report and Accounts, the letter of representation and report to those charged with governance.

Officials advised that the 2010/11 NIPB Financial Statements were signed by the Chief Executive on 13 June 2011 following the completion of the external audit by the Northern Ireland Audit Office (NIAO). The Chief Executive had also signed a letter of representation, giving various confirmations and assurances in relation to the governance and finances of the NIPB. The NIAO had produced a report to those charged with governance and this was received on 5 August 2011. NOTED.

A Member referred to a recent newspaper article which made reference to comments made in the NIAO report. Members expressed concern that aspects of the NIAO report had been published before the Committee had an opportunity to consider the report. Members discussed how the newspaper might have gained access to the information and whether the Board should seek a 'right of reply'. Officials advised that it was understood that NIAO had provided information on some of these issues in response to a freedom of information request from an MLA.

It was:-

RECOMMENDED:

- That the Chairperson and Vice Chairperson of the Board should seek to build a positive relationship with the media in terms of the work of the new Board;
- That all Members should be reminded of the importance respecting the status of Board information until it is formally shared with the media.

11. ASSISTED REMOVALS

The Committee considered a paper which advised Members of a number of requests from PSNI in relation to assisted removals.

It was:-

RESOLVED:

- To ratify the decision taken under Standing Order 21 to approve an extension to the police leased accommodation for 6 months from 1 November 2011 for ADM 34; from 26 November 2011 for ADM 42; and from 31 October 2011 for ADM 53;
- To ratify the decision taken under Standing Order 21 to approve an extension to the police leased accommodation for 6 months from 4 October 2011 for ADM 40;
- To ratify the decision taken by a Board official to approve an extension to the police leased accommodation for 1 month from 27 July 2011 for ADM 40;
- To approve a request by PSNI "approval in principle" for ADM 65 to be afforded the assisted removals package for those officers intimidated from their homes and that approval is sought from the DOJ;
- To consider a request by PSNI to pay the Loan Adjustor and criminal damage fees totalling £1625 for ADM 66;

- To consider a request from PSNI for approval to grant an interest free loan for an officer (ADM 54) in excess of the agreed 50% level set as part of the PSNI Discretionary Loan Scheme;
- To approve a request by PSNI to pay the broker's fee totalling £200 for ADM 49.

12. ACCOMMODATION – WATERSIDE TOWER

The Committee considered a confidential paper relating to the building lease for Waterside Tower and other matters.

It was:-

AGREED:

- That the Committee should receive a copy of a previous business case relating to the accommodation
- To continue ongoing work subject to the clarification of some ongoing issues;
- That the Chairperson of the Committee should discuss elements of the business case with other Board colleagues.

13. INFORMATION PAPERS

The Committee considered the following information papers:-

13.1 Signing Of PSNI Estate Document

NOTED.

13.2 The Northern Ireland Audit Office Report On the Continuous Improvement Arrangements in the NIPB

NOTED.

13.3 Procurement within PSNI – Annual Report on Procurement Savings and Achievements 2010/11

A Member referred to the section of the report dealing with scientific support – contract management and requested further information on the provision of forensic science support to PSNI. Officials undertook to obtain further information. Members also referred to recent comments made during court proceedings about delays in scientific reports being received by the courts. NOTED.

14. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

It was:-

AGREED:

That a question should be put to the Chief Constable to seek his assessment of the impact of delays in the provision of scientific reports on police investigations into crime and his assessment of the overall performance of scientific support services given to PSNI.

15. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

It was:-

AGREED:

That a news release should be issued affirming the Committee's determination to ensure that the organisation delivers value for money in its work.

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

16.1 Disposal of PSNI Stations

A Member referred to a newspaper article concerning the closure of PSNI stations and the respective roles of the PSNI and the Board. Members highlighted the need for good communication between the Chief Constable and the Board in the decision making process to close and dispose of stations. Officials advised the Committee that the “refresh” Estate Strategy was due to come to the Board and Members looked forward to receiving the strategy in due course.

17. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was arranged for Friday, 16 September 2011.

It was:-

AGREED:

That all future Resources and Improvement Committee meetings should be held on the afternoon of the 3rd Friday of the month at 1:00pm.

(Meeting closed 1:45pm)

Secretariat

August 2011

Chairperson