

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 25
NOVEMBER 2021 AT 2PM AT PSNI GARNERVILLE**

PRESENT:

Mr Gerry Kelly MLA (Chair)

Dr Janet Gray (Vice-Chair)

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA

(1) Mr Tom Frawley

Mr John Blair MLA

(2) Mr Mike Nesbitt

Mr Colm McKenna

Mr Frank McManus

Ms Deirdre Toner

(3) Mr Jonathan Buckley

Mrs Linda Dillon

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

(4) Mrs Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer

(5) Mr Mark McNaughten, T/Assistant Chief Officer
Corporate Services

(1) Mr Will Young T/Assistant Chief Officer People and
Organisational Development

(6) Senior Crown Counsel - PSNI Legal
Representative

(6) Colin Stafford – PSNI Legal Rep

(6) Rowan Moore – PSNI Legal Rep

(7) T/Chief Superintendent Sue Steen

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE

(8) Professor Ruth Fee

**OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive

Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Resources

Ms Aislinn McGuckin, T/Director of Police
Administration

Four Board Officials

(1) Items 6.1 only

(2) Left at 16.15

(3) Arrived 15.45; left at 17.50

(4) Items 6.3 and 6.4

- (5) Item 6.3 and 6.4
- (6) Item 6.4 only
- (7) Item 6.1 only
- (8) Item 6.1 only

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs Carmel McKinney. As there was no Zoom facility for this meeting Mrs McKinney was regrettably unable to attend and offered her apologies.

The Committee agreed the Agenda for the meeting and no one raised any business that they wanted to consider further under 'Any Other Business'.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2021

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 28 October 2021. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 28 October 2021 be approved.

4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG

The Committee noted the updates detailed within the Action Log and the related verbal overview provided by the Director of Resources.

The Director of Resources noted there were seven open actions currently on the log and 3 actions had been closed since the previous meeting.

In respect of Action Points 1 and 2 from the meeting on 28 October 2021, the Director of Resources advised that they are both listed as agenda items for consideration later in the meeting.

In relation to Action Point 3 from the meeting on 28 October 2021 the Director of Resources advised the Estate Protocol has been updated with the feedback from Members and is now with PSNI in terms of agreeing timeframes for the provision of information in respect of the estate.

In relation to Action Point 4 from the meeting on 28 October 2021 Members were advised that correspondence was issued to the PSNI on 11 November 2021 requesting the information. A programme of the proposed station closures has been received, however the remaining information, regarding projected income from sale of the stations and running costs for Portadown station from its closure until sale date is yet to be received.

In respect of Action Points 1 and 2 from the meeting on 23 September 2021, both are to be considered as agenda items later in today's meeting.

Action points 3 and 4 from the meeting on 23 September 2021 are now closed.

In relation to Action Point 4 from the meeting 19 May 2021 meeting, this will be considered as an agenda item later in today's meeting.

Regarding Action Point 6 from the meeting on 20 February 2020 in respect of an Estate Services Protocol, this action has now been closed as the Draft Estate Strategy Protocol was considered at the October Committee meeting. Further action at Action Point 3 from that meeting refers.

4.1 Correspondence from PSNI re OHW Payscales

The Director of Resources noted correspondence received from the Temporary Assistant Chief Officer (T/ACO) for People and Organisational Development in response to the Committee's letter of 5 October 2021 seeking full details of the recruitment issues in the OHW Branch. The Director of Resources noted that in his correspondence, the T/ACO for People and Organisational Development outlined the current vacancies within the branch and provided an update on the recruitment activity against each of the competitions.

Members noted the PSNI's commitment to fully resourcing the branch and that they are making the best use of available appointable pools having appointed an additional medical advisor to mitigate, to some degree, the vacancies in Nursing. They are also exploring options for re-profiling roles, and alternative entry routes, recognising the difficulties in recruiting to the nursing advisor roles.

Members expressed concern at the significant risk associated with the vacancies at a senior leadership level within PSNI OHW. Following discussion it was agreed that further correspondence should be issued to the PSNI requesting they expand further on the nature of the problems in relation to attraction and retention of staff. **(AP1)**

4.2 Correspondence from PSNI re Review of Police officer Sickness Absence

The Director of Resources noted this final report on sickness absence was considered at the September Committee meeting and the Committee agreed to send the final report to PSNI for factual accuracy and an initial response to the recommendations.

The Director of Resources advised that the Chief Operating Officer has responded with some minor factual accuracy comments and a response to the recommendations. A total of 33 recommendations were made and PSNI have requested clarification on 8 of them, 4 have been rejected, 1 is partially

accepted and the remainder have been accepted.

The Director of Resources advised she has forwarded the PSNI's response to HeadsTogether seeking clarification where requested and also their views on those recommendations which have been rejected before corresponding any further with PSNI.

A Member also requested formal clarification on how the 11.2 figure (target figure for sickness absence of police officers) had been arrived at and for information to be provided on how this compares to other emergency services such as the fire service. Director of Resources advised she will revert to PSNI on this figure and also request information on whether PSNI have done any benchmarking against other emergency services regarding a target figure in respect of sickness absence. **(AP2)**

4.3 Updated Minutes from 23 September 2021

The Committee considered the revised draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 23 September 2021. It was **RESOLVED** that:

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 23 September 2021 be approved.

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.1 Correspondence from PSNI re Priorities for Policing

The Chair noted correspondence received from the Chief Constable regarding the PSNI's assessment of the resource priorities required to deliver the objectives, actions and outcomes set out in the current Policing Plan. The priorities are assessed as:

1. Reaffirming the NDNA commitment to 7,500 officers;
2. Creating a Digital Police Service;

3. Building the Police College the next generation deserves, and;
4. A police estate fit for a changing world.

The Chief Constable requested Members note this information in advance of the forthcoming Budget.

Members discussed the 4 priorities outlined in this correspondence and considered that these are likely budgetary priorities rather than a divergence away from Policing Plan priorities. However, it was agreed correspondence will be issued to the PSNI seeking confirmation that these are budgetary priorities and requesting further detail in terms of the expected savings built in to these proposals and anticipated outcomes.

5.2 Correspondence from PSNI re Station Closure Programme

The Chair advised the second item relates to correspondence received from PSNI regarding the Programme for Closure of PSNI Stations/Sites which was requested at the October Resources Committee meeting.

Members noted the report and following discussion it was agreed that a quarterly Estates Strategy update will be brought to the Committee and that this should include an update on the intentions and ongoing actions regarding the disposal of stations. **(AP3)**

5.3 Removal and Relocation Policy

The Director of Resources noted the ongoing senior staff and officer appointments and that a number of Resources Committee Members are currently involved as appointment panel members.

While the Removal and Relocation policy was approved in October 2020 by the Committee, Members were advised that prior to further senior staff and officer appointments being made, Board Officials thought it appropriate to review the

policy and considered it necessary to include details regarding expenses being reimbursed should the individual terminate their service within the first three years of taking up post. Members noted this is in line with other similar policies across the public sector.

Members noted the amount that should be paid back to PSNI in such circumstances and confirmed they were content to **APPROVE** this policy.

5.4 Barriers to ACC Recruitment Research

The Director of Resources noted the final report on the barriers to ACC recruitment which has been received from HeadsTogether. This research was commissioned in July 2021 and the Committee had requested it be completed ahead the next ACC competition commenced. The initial meeting of the panel took place on 24 November 2021 and the Director of Resources noted the majority of the findings in respect of the feedback on the competition have been incorporated into the current process.

The Director of Resources highlighted some of the findings and recommendations in the report and following discussion it was agreed that HeadsTogether would be invited to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss this report in more detail. Members were advised that any additional feedback on the report should be forwarded to the Director of Resources. **(AP4)**

6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS

6.1 Governance Arrangements in the Police Training College

Following a brief tour of the Police College at Garnerville, the Chair welcomed T/Chief Superintendent Steen and her team to the meeting and thanked them for the opportunity to visit the College, see elements of the training in practice and hear more about the ongoing work.

T/C/Supt Steen provided a brief introduction to her team, the College

organisational structure, the various different types of training currently being provided by the College and noted that, while Garnerville is the main College facility, training is undertaken at various other site across the province.

Members were provided with overview of the papers provided in support the PSNI presentation, (Police College Governance Arrangements & NI Police College Performance Management Framework) and T/C/Supt Steen provided additional information on faculties within the College including Leadership and Crime, the Foundation Faculty, Learning Technology, Performance, Audit & Assessment and Facilities & Central Admin.

T/C/Supt Steen handed over to Professor Ruth Fee to provide Members with more information on the new degree programme now being offered to Student Officers. Members noted that the first cohort of Student Officers will start this programme in January 2022.

Professor Fee thanked the Committee for the opportunity to talk about the development of the graduate course and discussed with Members the co-design of the course with various stakeholders. She also discussed with Members the work integrated learning methodology of the course, the different pathways to achieving this degree depending on your qualifications at point of entry and the importance that all Student Officers have the same opportunity to succeed in achieving this qualification.

Following the presentation Members further discussed with College staff:

- Digitisation of the PSNI and how this will be further developed/ integrated to support training delivery.
- Academic and pastoral support available to Student Officers while in the College and also when they join their District team following training.
- The possibility of any future new Police College being co-located with other branches of PSNI. PSNI noted that the most important aspect of a new Police College is that the facilities should deliver the best possible learning

experience.

- The length of time to complete the new degree course, and,
- Proof of qualifications, equivalencies for those who have not been educated locally and accessibility to courses which will allow those from minority communities to achieve academic equivalency.

It was **AGREED:**

- That PSNI would provide a list on equivalency qualifications which can be made available for those from minority ethnic backgrounds to meet the required English Language standard for application to the PSNI.

The Chair thanks T/Chief Superintendent Steen and her team for the comprehensive presentation and they left the meeting.

6.2 Ex-Gratia Payment – Above Delegated Limits

The Director of Resources presented a paper outlining a request from the PSNI to approve a payment of £41,100 for PSNI Officers providing Mutual Aid at the COP26 Summit which took place from 31 October to 12 November 2021. During this time 156 officers from the PSNI travelled to Glasgow to provide assistance at this international event.

Members noted that this request relates to an Overnight Allowance not typically paid to PSNI Officers in respect of mutual aid duties but that, on this occasion, the PSNI Senior Executive Team decided to support the payment and as such this request has been submitted to the Board for consideration.

Members expressed concerns regarding the timing of this request and that it has been received retrospectively. The Director of Resources noted the matter went through the PSNI's internal governance process in October 2021 and subsequently come to the Committee for approval this month.

Following discussion it was:

- **AGREED** to approve the request for an ex-gratia payment.

6.3 PSNI Finance Report – October 2021

The Committee noted the PSNI's monthly Finance Report and Board officials provided a summary of the PSNI's financial position as at 31 October 2021.

It was noted that:

- The financial position halfway through the financial year is that the PSNI are reporting an under spend of £4.5m and a projected full year pressure of £4.4m.
- There is a year to date Capital underspend of £4.9m. This is mainly due to delays in Estates projects as a direct result of the impact of both COVID-19 and EU Exit.
- January monitoring bid has been submitted to Department of Justice (DoJ) and includes £3.4m for EU exit funding, £3.2m for Depreciation and £7.8m for Compensation payments.
- Overtime is constant pressure month on month

The Chair welcomed PSNI Chief Operating Officer (COO) Mrs Pamela McCreedy, PSNI T/Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) of Corporate Services Mr Mark McNaughten to the meeting.

The COO reported she has had recent discussions with DoJ officials and the PSNI could potentially be faced with a 2% cut in the 2022/23 financial year – this equates to approximately £70m and would have a significant impact on the service. This is due to be discussed by the NI Executive next week and the PSNI await confirmation of the outcome.

Members raised a number of questions with both the COO and T/ACO of Corporate Services including:

- Members requested a breakdown of the overtime costs per district per month – the T/ACO Corporate Services advised he will include this in next month's report. He explained that it does vary per district, for example Belfast and Derry/Londonderry are larger areas and therefore have a larger budget.
- The PSNI's bid for funds during the January monitoring round. The COO advised that if the PSNI don't receive these funds it will be difficult for them to break even at the end of the financial year.
- The above PSNI delegated limit compensation claims (to be considered at the next agenda item). The COO advised DoJ and DoF are aware of this case and to date positive discussions have been held with them in relation to the provision of the necessary funds.

The Committee thanked the COO and T/ACO of Corporate Services for the update provided.

6.4 Compensation Payment – Above Delegated Limits

The Committee received a confidential briefing from the PSNI and their legal representatives regarding proposed Above Delegated Limit Compensation payments following the conclusion of a mediation process between the Chief Constable and the plaintiffs in a civil case. A confidential annex detailing this briefing can be made available to Members for review but will not be published at this time.

6.5 Grant Requests – Above Delegated Limits

The Director of Resources presented a paper requesting Members to reconsider the request from the PSNI for grants to three organisations for the

provision of hate crime advocacy services. These grant requests were initially considered by Members at October's Resources Committee meeting however Members had requested further information which has since been obtained from PSNI.

PSNI advised that the submission of these requests had been delayed due to the fact that they hoped it would be possible to commence the new contract arrangements from October 2021. However, following consultation with CPD, their advice was that this would not be possible and therefore PSNI should continue to operate under the existing procedures until the new commercial contract is in place in April 2022.

The Director of Resources went on to advise Members that Board Officials had received additional information from PSNI yesterday (24 November 2021) advising that the DoJ had provided a view on this matter.

Members were briefed on the content of this correspondence which advised that, since PSNI's intention to move onto a commercial contract on 1 April 2021 had been delayed as a result of the pandemic, it was DoJ's view that this year's grants should be considered as fresh standalone applications and as such, are within PSNI's delegated limits. Consequently, approval from the Board and DoJ are not required.

While Members noted the importance of the provision of these services, they expressed their surprise and disappointment at this development and that the process had been taken out of their hands in this manner.

Following discussion it was agreed that this matter should be raised at the upcoming Board meeting on 2 December 2021 following which correspondence should be issued to PSNI and DoJ expressing the Committee's view and disappointment in respect of the handling of this issue and the manner in which this decision has been communicated to the Committee. **(AP6)**

6.6 Input to Minister's letter to the Police Remuneration Review Body

The Director of Resources presented a paper advising Members that the Board has been asked to put forward matters they wish to be considered for inclusion in the Minister of Justice's annual letter to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) to initiate the 2022/23 review of pay and conditions for officers in the PSNI.

Members were advised of the details of the proposed response to DoJ noting that consideration of the below matters within the 2022/23 pay review process would be welcomed by the Board:

- As no salary increase was recommended in the 2021/22 pay review process an increase should now be considered, however any increase should be in broad alignment with officers in England and Wales;
- Consideration of an increase to the NI Transitional Allowance;
- Agree a timeline to address the phasing out of Competence Related Threshold Payments and consideration of the suitability of any proposed alternative submitted from stakeholders.
- Board would also welcome consideration of a locally agreed salary band for the ACC position in PSNI given the demanding and complex role in comparison to other UK police services.

Members were also advised that prior to the formal submission of evidence to PRRB from the Board, the Committee has previously nominated Members to a Sub-Group to meet with the other stakeholders in order to inform the Board's position. As such Members were asked to agree a Sub-Group of Resources Committee to progress the Board's Annual Submission to PRRB 2022/23.

After discussion it was **AGREED**:

- To include the above matters in the Board's response regarding the Minister's remit letter to PRRB and;
- Membership of a sub-group to consist of Gerry Kelly, Colm McKenna and Deidre Toner.

6.7 Police Administration Cases for Committee Decision

6.7.1 The Committee considered a paper requesting Members review and make decisions on the eligibility of awards under Injury on Duty and Police Pensions Regulations further to assessments undertaken by Selected Medical Practitioners (SMPs) and Independent Medical Referees (IMRs).

Board officials advised Members that between 21 October 2021 and 12 November 2021, SMPs had considered 7 cases referred to them under the relevant regulations.

Members also considered 5 submissions where applicants have requested their case be reconsidered by either the SMP or IMR.

Following discussion it was **RESOLVED** that:

- The medical recommendations of the Selected Medical Practitioners in 7 cases assessed between 21 October 2021 and 12 November 2021 be approved.
- The four anonymised cases (RECON IMR 12-21/22, RECON IMR 13-21/22, RECON SMP 12-21/22, RECON SMP 13-21/22) progress to reconsideration by either a SMP or IMR.
- In respect of RECON IMR 14-21/22, Members noted that no further medical evidence had been provided and as such agreed this reconsideration request cannot currently be progressed.

6.7.2 Officer B Ill Health Retirement

Further to the information provided at the October Resources Committee in respect of Case reference 38-20/21, Members noted that the Committee sub-group had met to consider this case at which time further information had been requested to inform their discussions. On receipt on the requested information the subgroup reconvened on 8 November 2021 to further consider this case ahead of referring their recommendation to the full Committee for a final decision.

The sub-group Members advised that following deliberations, it was their opinion that the misconduct process should be concluded and therefore Officer B should not be permitted Ill Health Retirement at this stage.

Following discussions with the full Committee it was **RESOLVED** that:

- Officer B's application for Ill Health Retirement be refused, and,
- The ancillary matters raised during the course of discussions held by the sub-group should be fed back the Director of Performance to take forward with the PSNI's Professional Standards Department.

7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

The Committee did not raise any questions for submission to the Chief Constable.

8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES /OPPORTUNITIES

No communication issues were raised.

9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was conducted.

10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will take place on Thursday 16 December 2021 at 9.30am in Waterside Tower.

The meeting ended at 6.15pm

CHAIR

**RESOURCES DIRECTORATE
November 2021**