

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON MONDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 2.30PM IN JAMES HOUSE, BELFAST

PRESENT:

Ms Deirdre Toner (Chair)
Mr Edgar Jardine (Vice-Chair)
Dr Janet Gray
Ms Joanne Bunting MLA
Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
Mr Peter Osborne
Dr Kate Laverty*
Mr Gerry Kelly MLA
Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
Mr Brendan Mullan
Ms Nuala McAllister MLA
Mr Frank McManus
Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA
Mr Mark H Durkan MLA
Mr John Blair MLA
Mr Maurice Bradley MLA*
Mr Les Allamby

BAR LIBRARY

(1) Mr Ian Skelt KC

**NORTHERN IRELAND
POLICING BOARD
OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive
Mr Adrian McNamee, Director of Performance
Ms Aislinn McGuckin, Director of Police
Pensions & Injury Benefits

Four Board Officials

**OTHER OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr John Wadham*, Human Rights Advisor
Ms Joanne Kane, HeadsTogether Consulting

(1) From 4pm – 5pm

*Attended meeting by video conference facility

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mr Mukesh Sharma and Ms Liz Kimmins MLA.

2. LETTER OF RESIGNATION FROM THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

The Chair thanked all Members for attending this special Board meeting at short notice and advised that as permitted by paragraph 1 (c) of the Board's Standing Orders herself and the Vice-Chair have requested this meeting to advise Members that the Board has received a letter from the Chief Constable offering his resignation.

A confidential annex detailing this discussion can be made available to Members for review but will not be published at this time.

Following discussion Members unanimously **AGREED** to accept the Chief Constable's resignation.

The Chair reminded Members of the need to respect the confidentiality of this meeting. The Chair advised the Board will need to make an announcement to the media and it is the intention to do that later this afternoon, therefore Members should keep this information confidential until then. It was also agreed that the PSNI Service Executive Team and some partner agencies and organisations should be notified in advance of the media announcement.

3. NEXT STEPS

The Chair noted the limited options available at this time to provide cover for the Chief Constable role but highlighted the provision in the legislation under Section 34 of the Police Northern Ireland Act 2000 to ask the Deputy Chief Constable (DCC) to take on the duties of the Chief Constable for a three month period and asked Members if they would support this approach while continuing

to take legal advice on other options and discussing same with partner agencies.

During discussion the following issues were noted:

- Confirmation that under legislation the DCC is the only person in the existing SET that could be asked to assume the duties of the Chief Constable; there is no provision for Assistant Chief Constables (ACCs) to carry out this role;
- The mechanism/methodology for extending the period of cover past the initial three months if a permanent Chief Constable is not in post by then;
- The need to stabilise the service and progress a Chief Constable recruitment process at pace;
- Cost implications/possible uplift in DCC salary if assuming the duties of the Chief Constable, with Members agreeing these should be explored further;
- Actions of the previous Chair and Chief Executive;
- The actions of Members and need for confidentiality around sensitive discussions;
- The extent to which the Service was benefitting from the revised Service Executive Team (SET) structure.

The meeting was adjourned from 3.20pm until 3.40pm whilst the Chair and Vice-Chair briefed the media on the resignation of the Chief Constable. When the meeting resumed discussions continued on the limited legislative opportunities available to the Board to deal with the current situation in advance

of the Secretary of State (SoS) adopting power to ratify a senior officer appointment.

Following discussion it was **AGREED**:

- To prioritise the recruitment of a new Chief Constable for the PSNI
- In the interim the Deputy Chief Constable will exercise all of the functions of the Chief Constable
- To initiate a review of the Senior Executive Structure in PSNI
- To request the Department of Justice to commission a review of the Policing Board.

It was also agreed to issue a Board statement to the media detailing the actions noted above.

The private meeting closed at 6pm.

Strategic Planning & Governance

Date: September 2023

Chair