

**NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

**MINUTES OF MEETING OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 22  
FEBRUARY 2024 AT 9.30AM IN JAMES HOUSE**

**PRESENT:**

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Chair)  
Mr Frank McManus (Vice-Chair)\*  
Mr Brendan Mullan  
(3) Mr Mike Nesbitt MLA  
Mr Gerry Kelly MLA  
Mrs Linda Dillon MLA  
Dr Kate Laverty  
Ms Nuala McAllister MLA  
Mr Eóin Tennyson MLA

**EX OFFICIO MEMBERS IN  
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Edgar Jardine

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

(1) Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer  
(1) Mr Mark McNaughten, Assistant Chief Officer,  
Corporate Services  
(2) Marcus Belshaw, Head of Transport  
One PSNI official

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

Mr Sam Hagen, Senior Director of Resources  
Ms Natalia McMahon, Acting Director of Police  
Pensions and Injury Benefits  
Six Board Officials

- (1) Items 6.2 to 6.3 only
- (2) Item 6.2 only
- (3) Part item 4 to close

\* Attended meeting by video conference facility

## 1. APOLOGIES

The Chair welcomed Mr Eóin Tennyson MLA to his first Committee meeting.

Apologies were received from Mr Mukesh Sharma and Mr Keith Buchanan MLA.

The Committee agreed the agenda for the meeting, and no one raised any business that they wished to discuss at agenda item 9 under 'Any Other Business'.

## 2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared.

## 3. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 25 JANUARY 2023

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the Committee meeting held on 25 January 2024.

A member queried why a suggestion raised at January's Committee meeting for the establishment of an independent panel to review the time taken to conclude legal cases had not been included within the minutes. It was agreed that it would be included as an action point from February's meeting. **AP1**

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 25 January 2024 be

approved.

#### 4. UPDATE ON ACTION LOG

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

In respect of action points from the meeting in January 2024, the following updates were provided by the Director of Resources:

- Action point 1 – a response was received from PSNI noting a review has been commenced by Transport Services and Estate Services to confirm the number of operational charging points across the estate.
- Action point 4 – following on from questions raised at December's EDI presentation, it was noted that a reply is still awaited on several points.
- Action point 5 – a response was received from PSNI in respect of the schedule of high value cases. The document provided an updated schedule and as requested included an additional column with the date on which each of the 17 listed cases first came to PSNI Legal Services.

The Committee noted the additional information received following which a Member requested further information on the cases on the list where the Date of letter of Claim is 10 years or over and the reasons why it is taking so long to bring these cases to a conclusion. **AP2**

In respect of action point 2 from the meeting in December 2023 Members were informed that PSNI will attend today's meeting at agenda item 6.2 to provide a briefing on the Vehicle/Transport strategy.

In respect of Action Point 8 from the meeting in December regarding NIPB Staff Turnover, one Member noted that the Action Plan will be provided in the 24/25 financial year, however believed the absence of a definitive month is too vague.

It was **AGREED** that whilst this will be determined by the allocation of future budgets, a target month will be included on the action log for the next committee.

In respect of Action Point 3 from the meeting in October 2023 regarding Member's decision-making role in confirming SMP implementation and reassessment awards dates, members were informed that a draft FAQ document for claimants has been sent to CSO for an accuracy check and a response is awaited.

#### **4.1 PSNI response regarding REaL events**

In respect of action point 3 from the January 2024 meeting, Members noted the response received from PSNI addressing Members' queries regarding the actions taken following ideas generated by the REaL event attendees.

A Member asked if there would be an opportunity to discuss the information provided in more detail as she had a number of follow up questions that she would like PSNI to address.

The Committee considered that a question for written response could be forwarded to the Chief Constable on these points and Board officials advised they would follow up with the Member on the particular details of

the issues to be addressed.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

## **5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS**

The Committee **NOTED** the updates and related verbal overview provided by the Director of Resources in respect of the following agenda items.

### **5.1 Consultation re German Police Engagement**

The Committee considered correspondence received in respect of an approach by a German policing body requesting PSNI provide a three week 'internship' for several German officers wishing to visit PSNI.

The Director explained that PSNI were seeking clarification as to whether NIPB/DoJ approval was required for incoming visits to NI. Members were informed that whilst it is the role of the Committee to approve outward bound secondment requests, the Committee has no such role in relation to incoming secondments, therefore Members are asked only to note this correspondence.

Several members stated that they would welcome further information on the details of the proposed internship including information on the planned programme of events, the extent to which the officers will be involved with or observing operational activity, who they would be responsible to and assurance that they will not be involved in operational activity. **AP3**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

## **5.2 Letter from Jon Boutcher to Rt Hon. Chris Heaton-Harris MP - Police Service of Northern Ireland Resourcing**

Members noted correspondence copied to the Board between the Chief Constable Jon Boutcher and the Secretary of State Rt Hon. Chris Heaton-Harris MP regarding PSNI Resourcing issues.

Members noted that the letter covered matters including:

- The ongoing decline in officer numbers and the Chief Constable's plans to stop that decline by recommencing officer recruitment.
- Recent research on police officer numbers which would assess NI officers numbers as needing to be 7,400.
- The projected year end budgetary position and the impact of a possible flat cash settlement for policing going into the 2024-25 year.

Members discussed several points relating to matters raised in the correspondence including:

- The difference between the Patton recommendation of 7500 officers and the research by CREST Advisory assessing NI as being 7,400.
- The role of the Chief Constable as the sub-accounting Officer and the Board's responsibilities in holding him to account for decisions made in that capacity.
- PSNI's capacity to increase officer numbers and how the training college may handle increased training demands.
- The Board's role in ensuring the Chief Constable operates within the parameters of the available resources while also advocating for increased resources/officer numbers and the potential impact on the tripartite relationship.

A Member noted that in the correspondence the Chief Constable had

referenced a consultation with the DoJ. It was agreed that the Committee would seek further information on the outcome of the consultation with the DOJ. **AP4**

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

### **5.3 Letter to Committee Chair from Minister of Justice - NIPB & DOJ Joint Guidance to Medical Practitioners**

Correspondence was received from the Minister of Justice regarding the recent consultation on placing the Injury on Duty joint medical guidance (Guidance to Medical Practitioners on Injury on Duty Awards) on a statutory footing.

Members noted that the letter covered matters including:

- Confirmation that the consultation had now concluded.
- Budgeting constraints in relation to the delivery of updated medical guidance. Members noted the view of the Minister that this funding would have to be prioritised from the Board's future funding settlements.
- Steps being taken by the DoJ to progressing the recommendations made in the 2020 NIAO report.

Following on from this Members discussed:

- Reasons for the delay in putting the Guidance on a statutory footing.
- The length of time since an update was received on progress towards implementing the recommendations in the NI Audit Office March 2020 report.
- The recent scoping exercise regarding the Joint Medical Guidance.

In response to these questions the Acting Director of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits (PPIB) provided an update on the points raised. It was confirmed that correspondence was due for issue to DoJ urging a review of the legislation and requesting a timeframe of the consultation to begin. Members were advised that the DoJ is leading on the consultation regarding the recommendations in the NIAO 2020 report and all stakeholders have had the opportunity to feed into the consultation document.

Members **NOTED** the correspondence.

## **6. ITEMS FOR COMMITTEE BUSINESS**

### **6.1 Police Pensions and Injury Benefits - Cases for February 2024**

The Acting Director of Police Pensions and Injury Benefits presented a paper asking Members to consider the outcome of decisions made by Selected Medical Practitioners (SMPs) in respect of the 32 cases considered and provided opinion on between 15 January 2024 and 9 February 2024, and for 3 cases, issued via CJSM, in respect of reconsideration requests.

Members were provided with an update on 2 miscellaneous cases and informed that submissions were being gathered from all interested parties and will be shared with a sub-group of committee Members before full referral to the committee at a future date.

An update on the McCloud III Health Retirement Remedy Project was also presented to Committee. Members were informed that since the last update in January 2024 no additional consent forms have been received and additional 27 cases have been progressed during the reporting period.

Members **NOTED**:

- the outcome of the decisions made by Selected Medical Practitioners and **CONFIRMED** the implementation and reassessment dates for



the 32 cases outlined;

- the update provided on the 2 miscellaneous cases; and
- the 27 cases reassessed as part of the McCloud III Health Retirement Remedy Project.

Members **AGREED**:

- That the 3 cases, issued to Members via CJSM, in respect of reconsideration applications should proceed to reconsideration.

Before PSNI joined the meeting Board officials provided Members with an overview of agenda items 6.2, the PSNI Briefing on Vehicles/Transport and 6.3, the PSNI Finance Report.

The Chair welcomed the Chief Operating Officer (COO), ACO Corporate Services and the Head of Transport to the meeting.

## **6.2 PSNI Briefing on Vehicles/Transport**

The Head of Transport presented Members with an update of the PSNI Fleet Strategy 2024 and beyond. The update focused on the following strands of activity:

- Commissioning and disposal of vehicles
- Acquirement of parts and the contracting of works
- Recruitment and retention of staff

Detail was provided around the ongoing difficulties faced in each of these areas. He explained that of the 2700 vehicles in the fleet, 233 are waiting to be commissioned and 200 are pending disposal.

A breakdown of the types of vehicles currently being commissioned was provided and it was also highlighted that with current vehicle numbers, availability for some geographical areas is as low as 70%.

In respect of the commissioning of vehicles a member noted the NIAO report on PSNI 'Assets in the course of construction' recorded 800 transport assets and asked if PSNI could provide a reconciliation of these figures.

An update on the number of soft skin vehicles awaiting decommissioning was also requested. **AP5**

The Head of Transport then highlighted supply chain issues with acquiring certain vehicle parts and noted that the ongoing conflict in Russia and Ukraine was a significant factor impacting the supply chain. Difficulties with the outsourcing of specialist work was also provided.

On headcount requirements, a comparison was provided between the required labour hours vs available labour hours and Members noted the significant deficit.

Members were advised of the challenging marketplace conditions in terms of the recruitment of skilled staff which has contributed to ongoing recruitment and retention issues and were also informed of ongoing recruitment campaigns by other organisations.

On future actions that could be taken the Head of Transport discussed the possibility of job evaluation/regrading and engagement with staff around non-monetary benefits. The potential for increasing the workforce through apprenticeship schemes was also discussed.

Following the presentation Members discussions with PSNI included the following.

- The current starting salary for mechanics in the PSNI.
- The utilisation of the two BearCat's previously purchased by PSNI and whether there is any intention to add to this number.
- The EV (Electric Vehicle) roll out and concerns that the infrastructure is not currently in place for the number of EV charging points to match

the number of available vehicles. Members were updated on ongoing work with PSNI Estates to address this.

- The average lifespan of a police vehicle.
- What steps are being taken to implement an apprenticeship scheme and what would the pay point be as compared to other sectors?
- Whether all modes of PSNI transport fall under the Fleet Strategy and if so, could they be included in a future update.
- Whether PSNI have their own or a preferred manufacturer for certain things which could mitigate supply chain issues.

Members **NOTED** the update provided and thanked the Head of Transport for his contribution and he then left the meeting,

### 6.3 PSNI Finance Report

The ACO Corporate Services presented Members with an overview of the monthly PSNI Finance Report and financial position at the end of January 2024.

The ACO Corporate Services reported a year-to-date non-ring-fenced pressure of £26.8m at the end of January 2024 and a total estimated full year pressure of £61.1m. This is an increase of £11.2 million on last month and includes a remaining pressure of £4.4m on depreciation. This is due to anticipated pressures for the 2023-24 pay awards for officers and staff, insufficient budget for NI protocol staff, unfunded Op Rondoletto costs, and overtime/ non-pay costs in relation to Op Sanukite.

The ACO Corporate Services informed Members that following the restoration of the NI Assembly, the Executive has agreed to make £75 million in additional funding available to DoJ and that they expected PSNI's allocation from that £75m would allow PSNI to bring the in-year budget to a break-even position. PSNI noted that, while welcome, this additional funding

is not guaranteed to be recurring and therefore PSNI are likely to be facing an increased budget deficit for the 2024-25 year.

The ACO Corporate Services also noted a Capital expenditure easement of £1.0m in the November monitoring round which reduces total projected spend for the year to £64.1m.

In respect of overtime, the ACO Corporate Services advised that expenditure in January 2024 was within the original profiled budget, and there is now a year date pressure of £2.7m, compared to £2.9m reported in the previous month.

The ACO Corporate Services also discussed confirmation received from DoJ of separate additional funding of £6million that had been allocated in relation to Data breach expenditure.

The Chief Operating Officer then provided an update on recruitment and discussed the difficulties in increasing officer numbers within the current budgetary constraints and highlighted the limited capacity available at the existing college facility.

Following the presentation Members discussions with PSNI included the following.

- Whether the potential £75 million of additional funding from DOJ will cover the proposed 7% pay increase.
- On the lower overtime spend within the Professional Standards section, the Chief Operating Officer explained that PSD is a small branch, and that additional resources were currently deployed within the branch therefore limiting the need for overtime.
- Regarding funding made available for the NI Protocol/Windsor Framework implementation, PSNI noted that they anticipate this will be a declining funding stream due to the parameters for bidding becoming narrower and also being linked to legislation.

- On whether the £27 million of capital expenditure is likely to be spent before the end of the financial year, the ACO Corporate Services explained that this is normal for the final quarter of the year and that he remained confident it will be spent.
- Whether IT spend has reached a peak, and should consideration be given to bringing in outside experts to review current expenditure.
- The number of IT assets which are currently considered as being “in the course of construction” **AP6**

The Chair thanked PSNI for the briefing and COO McCreedy and ACO McNaughten left the meeting.

#### **6.4 PSNI Above Delegated Authority request**

The Committee considered a request for an above delegated authority sum of £2,100,000 which is the maximum amount PSNI consider may be payable for both compensation and legal fees relating to a legacy case.

Members noted a summary of the background to the case provided by PSNI and also that initially in this case proceedings were issued against the Chief Constable, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) and the Secretary of State. Board officials advised that clarity had been sought on the issue of any joint liability and PSNI had confirmed that, as the case relied on the findings of a OPONI report the findings of which had been fully accepted by PSNI, there was no joint liability and therefore PSNI are solely responsible for settling the claim.

The Committee also noted that to date no settlement offer had been agreed with the plaintiffs and that the legal costs listed are estimated at this stage.

Members discussed a number of points relating to the above delegated authority request, these included:

- A separate but not unrelated ongoing legal case and any potential

impact this could or should have on Committee's considerations of the matter;

- The PSNI's statement in their submission that they do not consider the matter novel or contentious,
- That the PSNI legal advice on the matter is to seek a settlement, and
- The length of time the case has been ongoing and the consequent impact on the family.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** by a majority:

- To recommend the Board **APPROVES** the PSNI Above Delegated Authority request to make a payment to the maximum value of £2,100,000.

The Committee Chair NOTED with Members that he was against approving the request.

## **6.5 Draft Police Remuneration Body (PRRB) submission**

The People and Organisational Development (OD) manager presented a paper which provided Members with an update on the current position and outlined the next steps and anticipated timescales in progressing the PRRB process for 2024/25.

An overview was provided of the subgroup's proposed draft submission to PRRB and the People and OD manager informed members that this will need to be updated if the previous year's report is issued by the Department within the next few weeks.

The People and OD manager also referenced correspondence issued by the Minister of Justice to the Police Advisory Group confirming submission of the Department's remit letters to PRRB and the Senior Salaries Review Body (SSRB)

The letter went onto confirm that the Minister had asked for PRRB to initiate

the pay round for 2024/25 and outlined which issues are not included in the remit.

Members **AGREED** to the contents of the draft submission.

## 6.6 PSNI written update on South Armagh Review Recommendations

Members were presented with a progress update on the implementation of the nine recommendations which sit with the Committee from the South Armagh Review Report. The Committee received its last update on the implementation of the recommendations at the September 2023 meeting.

The Committee were informed that PSNI consider seven of the nine recommendations to be complete and the two remaining open recommendations to be Rec 6 New South Armagh Police Station and Rec 41 Continuous Professional Development.

During discussion Members raised the following points:

- That the remaining module of CPD training will be delivered on 29 February following which PSNI will consider this recommendation complete.
- That there should be no diminution in functionality or impact on other 'blue light' services as a consequence of the relocation of the communications tower.
- That the Committee does not consider Recommendation 15, [Armoured Vehicles], as being complete and as such Members would like to continue to receive further updates on progress in this area.

Members **NOTED** the update in respect of the implementation of the 9 recommendations and **AGREED** correspondence be issued to PSNI:

- Requesting assurances regarding the functionality of the new communications tower which is to be relocated within Crossmaglen,

and,

- Advising that the Committee considers Recommendation 15, (Armoured Vehicles) to be not yet fully implemented and as such Members wished to continue to receive further updates on progress on this recommendation. **AP7**

Members **NOTED** the written update provided and requested the continued receipt of 6 monthly written updates regarding recommendations 6, 15 and 41 referenced above.

#### **6.7 Parental Bereavement Leave – Draft Determination SA**

The People and Organisational Development (OD) manager presented Members with a paper detailing the Parental Bereavement Leave Draft Determination SA consultation process.

It was outlined that current legislation in Northern Ireland entitles an employee, as a bereaved parent, to at least 2 weeks leave in the event of the death of their child.

Currently PSNI officers as servants of the Crown are not covered under this legislation.

Members **AGREED** a response is issued to the consultation in support of this entitlement being extended to PSNI officers.

#### **7. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE**

No questions were submitted.

#### **8. COMMUNICATIONS ISSUES / OPPORTUNITIES**

No issues or opportunities were discussed.



**9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was considered.

**10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Committee were notified that there will be no March meeting of the Resources Committee.

The meeting ended at 12.20pm

**CHAIR**

**RESOURCES DIRECTORATE  
MARCH 2024**