

NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD HELD ON THURSDAY 6 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 9.30AM IN NIPB HQ, JAMES HOUSE, BELFAST

MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:

Mr Mukesh Sharma (Chair)
Mr Brendan Mullan (Vice Chair)
(1) Mr Cathal Boylan MLA*
(2) Mrs Linda Dillon MLA
(3) Ms Cheryl Brownlee MLA
(3) Miss Nuala McAllister MLA
Mr Tommy O'Reilly
Mr Peter Osborne
Mr Les Allamby
Dr Kate Lavery
(4) Mr Frank McManus
(5) Mr Alan Chambers MLA
(3) Mr Peter McReynolds MLA
(6) Mr Trevor Clarke MLA
(7) Mr Mark H Durkan MLA
Mr Gerry Kelly MLA
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA
Mr Patrick Nelson*

POLICE SERVICE OF NORTHERN IRELAND IN ATTENDANCE:

(8) Mr Jon Boutcher, Chief Constable
(8) Mr Bobby Singleton, Deputy Chief Constable
(8) Ms Pamela McCreedy, Chief Operating Officer
(8) Mr Mark McNaughten, Assistant Chief Officer Corporate Services
(8) Mr Chris Todd, Assistant Chief Constable
(8) Ms Clare Duffield, Assistant Chief Officer People & Organisational Development
(8) Ms Aldrina Magwood, Assistant Chief Officer Strategic Planning & Transformation
(8) Mr Davy Beck, Assistant Chief Constable
(8) Ms Melanie Jones, Assistant Chief Constable
(8) Mr Ryan Henderson, Assistant Chief Constable

- (8) Mr Stephen Murray, A/Assistant Chief Constable
- (8) Three Officials

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

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive
Mr Sam Hagen, Senior Director of Resources
Mr Adrian McNamee, Director of Performance
Ms Jenny Passmore, Director of Partnership
Four Officials

**OTHER OFFICIALS IN
ATTENDANCE:**

Mr John Wadham, Human Rights Advisor

- (1) Left at 10.50am
- (2) Left at 1.25pm
- (3) Left after public session
- (4) Left at 1.50pm
- (5) From 10.10am, left at 1.40pm
- (6) From 10.05am
- (7) From 9.50am
- (8) Item 10 only

The Chair opened the meeting and on behalf of the entire Board offered deepest sympathies to the family, friends and colleagues of a member of PSNI Pensions Branch who sadly passed away earlier in the week and advised that he will write to the family to offer the Board's condolences at this most difficult time.

The Chair asked Members to **NOTE** minor changes to the agenda following discussions at the recent Board development event, and this will allow Board decisions to be considered earlier in the meeting.

Members **AGREED** the agenda.

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Mrs Marian Cree.

2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

No conflicts of interest were declared and Members did not indicate any matters they wished to raise under 'Any Other Business' at agenda item 13.

3. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE BOARD MEETING HELD ON:

3.1 Thursday 5 December 2024

The Chair asked Members to consider the draft minutes from the Board meeting held on Thursday 5 December 2024.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Board meeting held on Thursday 5 December 2024 be approved for publication.

4. ACTION LOG

Members **NOTED** the action log in respect of the Board meetings held on 5 December 2024 and 7 November 2024.

In relation to the open action points from the Board meeting on 5 December 2024 the Chief Executive provided the following updates:

- Action point 1 – this relates to issues raised on vetting for senior officer recruitment. This matter will be taken forward by the Board's Resources Committee as part of the review of the guidance, and this action can now be closed.

- Action point 4 – this action relates to correspondence from the Board Chair to the Justice Minister in respect of Injury on Duty and Ill Health Retirement processes. A response is awaited and this action will remain open.
- Action point 5 – this action regarding the Chief Constable's performance review will remain open and will be progressed in March 2025 in line with the standard performance reporting cycle.

A Member raised a separate issue in relation to PSNI Officers attending benefits offices to claim Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) when absent from work due to illness and highlighted the potential security issues. Following discussion Board Officials will seek further clarity on the process for ESA applications and then follow up with PSNI on this matter. **(AP1)**

The Chief Executive advised Members that a public consultation for the Board's new corporate plan 2025-30 will close on 3 March 2025 following the three month consultation period. In order to progress submissions from the consultation it was proposed that a small group of Members meet to discuss responses.

The Chief Executive asked for volunteers to sit on this group and following nominations it was **AGREED** that:

- Mr Keith Buchanan MLA, Dr Kate Laverty, and Mrs Linda Dillon MLA will sit on the Board's corporate plan consultation group, with a meeting to be arranged by Board officials after the public consultation closes. **(AP2)**

5. CHAIRPERSON'S BUSINESS

5.1 Chair's Report

The Chair asked the Board to **NOTE** the Chair's report and associated addendum which advised Members of:

- The Chair's engagements carried out during the period 6 December 2024 to 28 January 2025.
- A full list of correspondence issued and received by the Chair during the period 5 December 2024 to 5 February 2025.

In respect of engagements which may be of particular interest the Chair referred Members to Appendix 1A of the report for further information.

The Chair highlighted a meeting with the President of the National Black Police Officers Association to discuss issues in relation to recruitment, working conditions, cultural audit and engagement. These matters will be referred to the Board's Partnership and Resources Committees to progress further.

The Chair thanked Members for their attendance and participation at the recent two day Board development event, recognising the value of the event with high levels of engagement and collaboration from Members and PSNI.

The Chair highlighted correspondence from the Chief Constable regarding his role in senior officer recruitment, and Members were advised this will be taken forward by the Board's Resources Committee as part of reviewing the senior officer appointment process and associated guidance. **(AP3)**

In respect of other matters to bring to the Board's attention, the Chair advised that the Chief Constable will not be available to attend the scheduled Board meeting in June 2025; a meeting with the Northern Ireland Bureau and PSNI in relation to Saint Patrick's Day events in Washington DC and sought Members

views on the Board's participation in the events in order to exploit any opportunities to advocate for policing; and highlighted a Members recent 'Ride Along' with PSNI.

Members raised the following matters in relation to the Chair's report:

- Concerns regarding correspondence from the Chair of the Committee for the Executive Office regarding Historical Institutional Abuse, to advise that PSNI could not provide the information requested. In response the Chief Executive advised that further discussions would take place with PSNI in an effort to resolve this matter. **(AP4)**
- Work taking place to expand co-operation and mutually beneficial arrangements between policing and criminal justice agencies North and South of the border following the extended process to authorise the provision of a victim detection dog to An Garda Síochána.
- Correspondence from Board Chair to the Justice Minister regarding concerns from Independent Custody Visitors that access to custody records has been routinely denied where the detained person was unavailable to give their consent.
Following discussion, Board Officials will follow up on this matter with the Department of Justice (DoJ). **(AP5)**
- The Board's proposed next steps in respect of correspondence received outlining a complaint from a survivor of historical abuse.
Members were advised that complaints of this nature which do not fall under the Board's remit will be forwarded to the relevant organisation and noted that this correspondence has been referred to the Office of the Police Ombudsman for NI.

- A Member outlined support for the Board Chair to participate in Saint Patrick's Day events in Washington DC to build relationships and advocate for policing. Other Members questioned the value and need for the Board to be represented such events while others noted that international engagement opportunities have been limited in recent years due to the pandemic and the importance of lobbying for policing outside NI; some Members questioned whether a visit to North America at another time of the year would be more productive.

In response Members were advised that events for Saint Patrick's Day in Washington DC have not been finalised and so the Board has yet to receive any formal invitations; PSNI have sent representatives to North America in recent years but not around Saint Patrick's Day; and that other opportunities will likely be available for international engagement in the future.

Following discussion, the Chair advised the matter will be revisited subject to the Board receiving an invitation to Saint Patrick's Day events in Washington DC.

- Overview from an Independent Member following participation in a PSNI Ride Along including activities carried out on shift, feedback on shift patterns, and support for the PSNI Leadership team.

Members raised other concerns including injuries associated with the weight of body worn vests/ accessibility issues due to the size of police vehicles, and recruitment matters including lateral entry for Detectives and ongoing challenges to encourage PSNI applicants from working class areas.

Members **NOTED** the additional updates provided.

5.2 The McCullough Review - Progress Report

The Chief Executive asked Members to **NOTE** the McCullough Review progress report on the independent review into concerns regarding PSNI conduct and covert surveillance of journalists and lawyers, and correspondence from the Chief Constable to advise the final report will likely be early Summer 2025 to allow adequate time for this work to be completed.

Additionally, Members were advised of the intent from Mr Angus McCullough KC to provide the Chief Constable with a more definitive timetable by early March 2025 for completion of the review.

The Board's Human Rights Advisor updated Members on the remit of the review as outlined in the progress report and that a substantial enlargement of the remit would not be practical or desirable at this stage due to additional workload and time taken to complete.

Members raised the following matters:

- Impact of decision in respect of the review remit, outlined above, and whether it indicated a reduced remit.

In response Members were advised that the decision taken on the review remit is in line with the flexible nature of the review Terms of Reference.

- Clarity regarding PSNI so called 'defensive operation' – this described two processes, (i) the lawful process where PSNI telephones and telephones provided by PSNI to officers and staff were routinely checked to make sure they were only used for official purposes. This was not 'covert' as staff and officers were made aware of this. Part (ii) a procedure whereby journalists numbers which were provided by journalists to PSNI voluntarily in order to be able to contacted by PSNI as part of their professional activities were 'run against' the telephone numbers in (i).

In response Members were advised that views differed about the lawfulness of this (the IPT found it was lawful). Angus McCullough will be considering this as part of his Review.

- The need for the Board to receive the full report before its release as part of its oversight responsibilities, and that its scrutiny role will be assisted by the Human Rights Advisor who will be provided with an unredacted version,
- Consideration was given to the role of the Board's Special Purposes Committee to receive unredacted reports and need to ensure this does not unduly restrict the content of the report available to other Members not on the Committee.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to write to the Chief Constable about the timetable for release of the final report and address other issues raised, and following the response to add this matter to the Board meeting agenda in March 2025 for further consideration. **(AP6)**

5.3 Sweeney Review of the Board – Final Report

Members **NOTED** the final report of the independent review of the Board, which had been previously provided to Members ahead of public release for discussion at the recent Board development event and were advised that next steps will be discussed later in the meeting at agenda item 8.3.

5.4 Omagh Bombing Inquiry: second request to the Northern Ireland Policing Board pursuant to Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006

The Chief Executive provided Members with details of the Omagh Bombing Inquiry second request to the Northern Ireland Policing Board pursuant to Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006.

The Chief Executive advised that further to an initial request in Summer 2024 the Board received a further rule 9 request in November 2024 and have been working with the inquiry team and the Crown Solicitors Office to provide a detailed response.

Members were advised that a significant amount of material was to be reviewed and therefore an extension was requested and approved to complete this piece of work, and this continues at pace to facilitate the submission of a formal response to the Inquiry.

The Chief Executive thanked the Board's communications manager for her hard work and dedication to fulfil the request from the Omagh Bombing Inquiry team.

Members **NOTED** the update and were advised that Officials were available to respond to any questions after the meeting.

6. CHIEF EXECUTIVE'S REPORT

The Board **NOTED** a report from the Chief Executive which provided an overview of governance and other organisational matters and to inform the Board of key items of correspondence relating to Board business.

The Chief Executive highlighted the following matters:

- In relation to correspondence received and not included in the report, ongoing communication from a member of the public with an Independent Board Member regarding allegations of systemic police abuse has been shared with PSNI.
PSNI have responded to advise they are engaging with the individual concerned, and discussions continue between Officials and the Member concerned in relation to next steps.

Additionally, as previously notified an Independent Member continues to receive correspondence from a serving officer raising a number of issues. This was shared with PSNI and a response received. Further discussions are to take place with PSNI with a view to then forwarding their response to the individual concerned.

- In relation to the Board's financial situation, DoJ has taken account of the easements offered in the last monitoring round, and members noted that further easements were likely before the end of the financial year due to time delays in securing vetting for staff [permanent and agency] . Members were assured that work continues to progress vetting, with additional support from senior levels in PSNI, to expedite security clearance checks for new staff as they noted that insufficient resources continue to have a significant impact on the Board's service delivery.
- The performance report for Quarter 3 (Q3) against the Policing Board's annual business plan and the Q3 equality and disability action plan updates have been provided for Members information.
- Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection Act (DPA) requests continue to cause concern due to the additional pressure placed on resources given the number and complexity of these requests.
- Members were reminded of the open invitation to attend PSNI Attestations and scheduled TEAM PSNI events, and the importance of Member participation as part of the advocacy role of the Board.
- In relation to Policing and Community Safety Partnerships (PCSPs) work continues to address some of the remaining gaps, and training for policing committees will conclude soon and training for Chairs will commence in due course.

The Partnership Director and her team were thanked for the evening work which has taken place to successfully deliver events and the Board's Vice Chair for leading some of these, and that the work from all involved are greatly appreciated by PCSP members.

- In relation to Police Pensions & Injury Benefits (PPIB), work continues to progress the significant volume of cases and options are being explored to improve ways of working as well as strengthen policies in relation to conflicts of interest and forfeiture.

Additionally, work is continuing as part of Selected Medical Practitioners (SMPs) recruitment.

The Vice Chair asked about available options to reallocate resources to alleviate pressures in managing FOI and DPA requests, and the Chief Executive confirmed that overtime has recently been offered to support PPIB caseload and to progress the Board's Retention and Disposal project.

7. COMMITTEE REPORTS

7.1 Performance Committee – 12 December 2024

The Board **NOTED** the Performance Committee Chair's report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024.

7.2 Resources Committee – 19 December 2024, 23 January 2025, and 30 January 2025

The Board **NOTED** the Resources Committee Chair's reports of the meetings held on 19 December 2024 and 23 January 2025, and the special meeting held on 30 January 2025 in relation to the proposed purchase of the site at Kinnegar in Hollywood.

Members **NOTED** the two PSNI Above Delegated Authority (ADA) requests recommended to the Board for approval at the Committee meeting on 19 December 2024, and due to the Christmas break, these two requests were approved by the requisite number of Members by way of written procedure.

The Committee Chair advised of two recommendations from the Committee meeting on 23 January 2025 in relation to PSNI ADA requests.

The first ADA request related to increased settlement costs for a case previously considered by the Committee at its meeting in September 2024. Members were asked to consider this case again due to a revised overall settlement figure.

The second ADA request related to a compensation claim in respect of injuries sustained by a former police officer.

It was subsequently **AGREED** by Members to:

- **APPROVE** the two PSNI Above Delegated Authority requests outlined above.

Members expressed ongoing concerns in respect of the settlement sums involved, the substantial legal fees incurred over many years, and the duration of some cases before final settlement is achieved.

The Committee Chair emphasised the need for ongoing scrutiny in this area to provide public assurance and Members were advised that the Board's Resources Committee will continue to scrutinise ADA requests, and that an annual update on ongoing legal cases/ settlements from PSNI Legal Services department is scheduled to come to the Committee meeting in February 2025.

the Chief Executive highlighted that Members have been giving this matter increasing focus including by way of questions to the Chief Constable on the issue.

The Committee Chair advised Members of one recommendation from the Special Committee meeting held on 30 January 2025 to consider PSNI's proposed purchase of the Kinnegar site in Holywood,

Several Members were not content with the responses provided to concerns previously raised by the Committee.

Following discussion it was **AGREED** by the majority of Members to:

- **APPROVE** the purchase of the Kinnegar site in Holywood for the future development of a new police college and rationalisation of other PSNI Belfast sites.

Mr Trevor Clarke MLA, Mr Keith Buchanan MLA, and Ms Cheryl Brownlee MLA asked to be recorded against the Resources Committee recommendation to approve the purchase of the site at Kinnegar.

7.3 Audit & Risk assurance Committee – 19 December 2024

The Board **NOTED** the Audit & Risk assurance Committee Chair's report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2024.

The Chair advised of one recommendation from the Committee in relation to the provision of new Information Technology (IT) equipment to Members, and advised this matter will be considered later in the meeting at agenda item 8.2.

7.4 Partnership Committee – 16 January 2025

The Board **NOTED** the Partnership Committee Chair's report and draft minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2025.

8. BOARD BUSINESS

8.1 Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2025-2030 and Annual Performance Plan 2025-2026

The Vice Chair provided Members with a summary of work which has taken place in the past eight months as part of developing the final draft Northern Ireland Policing Plan 2025-2030 and Annual Performance Plan 2025-26, and advised this was achieved through successful engagement and collaboration with the PSNI leadership team led by the Director of Performance and his team.

The Vice Chair outlined the planning process which included an initial strategic planning event in May 2024, at which ten themes were agreed to be taken forward in the new plan.

This was followed by the establishment of a Policing Plan Development Working Group (PPDG) made up of Board Members and the PSNI leadership team to progress the Board's statutory requirements to publish a new Policing Plan 2025-30 by 1 April 2025.

The Vice Chair advised Members that the PPDG agreed three outcomes and sixteen Indicators as the basis for the Policing Plan 2025-2030. This was followed by a twelve week public consultation from September to December 2024 and a total of 52 responses were received.

During the consultation period five public outreach events were successfully carried out and over 70 members of the public participated to provide feedback to the consultation questions. The Vice Chair noted that during the consultation period there was broad agreement and support for the draft plan.

The PPDG continued to meet during the consultation period to agree baseline measures and impacts which are set out in the year one annual performance

plan. This sets out high level resourcing requirements for the Policing Plan and confirms its alignment with the draft programme for government.

A full consultation analysis document is available should Members wish to avail of it, and a summary document will be published in due course.

In relation to next steps, the final draft of the Policing Plan will now be submitted to the Justice Minister for consideration, and subject to the response the intention is to launch the new Policing Plan 2025-30 at the Board meeting in April 2025.

The PPDG will continue to meet during this period with a focus on agreeing a scrutiny framework for the Board for delivery of the plan.

Members extended thanks to the Vice Chair for Chairing the PPDG and for the support and hard work from the Director of Performance, Board officials and PSNI to deliver the final draft Policing Plan 2025-30; asked whether the plan remains in final draft version until approved by the Minister; and acknowledged the positive inclusion of a greater emphasis on a Victim Charter and wider criminal justice reform.

In response the Director of Performance advised that in relation to the current status of the plan, legislation requires consultation with the Minister and a written response was previously submitted by DoJ as part of the consultation process, with the points raised incorporated in the plan.

Members were advised that the objective from today's meeting is for the Board to approve the plan to facilitate the final consultation with the Minister.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** by Members to:

- **APPROVE** the draft Policing Plan 2025-2030 and Annual Performance Plan 2025-26.

8.2 Information Technology (IT) Arrangements for NIPB Board Members

The Director of Resources presented an updated paper following previous consideration of this matter at the Board meeting in December 2024, and Members questions at the December meeting to facilitate further discussion in respect of proposed changes to IT arrangements for Board Members.

These proposed changes are in response to potential security vulnerabilities with the current set up and provide a more secure solution for accessing and sharing information electronically.

In line with the previous recommendation from the Board meeting in December 2024 Members were advised that the preferred option was to issue all Members with IT Assist Laptops and Policing Board email accounts.

In order to mitigate the impact of these changes the Director of Resources proposed a second option and to implement this change for Independent Members only at this time, and discussions will continue to integrate these changes with the new NI Assembly Commission devices for Political Board Members.

Members raised the following matters:

- Support for the implementation of these IT changes for the reasons outlined and whether an alternative IT solution can be found for the Chair and Vice Chair due to the unique nature of these roles compared to all other Members.
- Accessibility issues in respect of restrictions with Board issues IT Assist issued laptops to print documents at home, for example, speaking notes.
- To ensure that any changes to the IT arrangements for Political Members include Researchers and clarity regarding automatic or 'push' updates

with Board issued laptops compared to current Board issued iPads used by Members.

- Functionality of Board issued IT Assist laptops and whether applications are cloud based, and disadvantages associated with managing multiple passwords across different devices should Members be provided with new laptops.
- The NI Assembly has recently issued new devices to Political Members, and therefore preference would be not to carry another laptop device when 'on the go', and that Board issued iPads were preferable.

In response, the Director of Resources advised that Board issued iPads continue to represent a security risk due to the requirement for users to manually approve security updates; Board issued IT Assist laptops ensure automatic updates.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** by Members to:

- **APPROVE** the option that Independent Members **only** are provided with IT Assist Laptops and Policing Board e-mail accounts in the first instance while Board Officials continue to progress discussions relating to Political Members using their new NI Assembly Commission devices.

The Chair requested that IT support is provided to Independent Members when the new Board issued IT Assist laptops and email accounts are being rolled out.

(AP7)

8.3 Next steps from Board Development Event – January 2025

The Chief Executive presented a paper on the Board's two-day development event in January 2025 which included a summary of discussions from the event, and suggested next steps for consideration and agreement by Members.

Members were advised that issues collated from group discussions at the event and proposed next steps have been broken down in the paper by theme and linked to points highlighted in the final report from the independent review of the Board, with proposed next steps assigned a Red/Amber/Green (RAG) status to categorise ease of implementation based on resources and finance.

The theme for each of the areas were outlined, as follows:

- Modus Operandi/ Culture,
- Tripartite Arrangements,
- Scrutiny,
- Advocacy/ Engagement,
- Ongoing Board development,
- Executive Support Team, and
- Employer duties to PSNI Service Executive Team.

The Chief Executive gave a flavour of the discussion from the development event on these themes.

Members raised the following matters with the Chief Executive:

- Positive feedback on the effectiveness of the Board development event.
- Positive feedback on RAG analysis for proposed next steps and that it identifies 'quick wins' linked to findings from the independent review of the Board.
- Concerns that additional workload is not supported with additional resources for the Board, and in the medium/ long term this may result in missed opportunities to effect change.

Members concluded that additional time was required to consider each of the themes, our response to them and proposed next steps as outlined in the paper.

In response Members **AGREED** to establish a working group to develop a response to the NIPB review and suggested next steps and to bring the draft response back to the March Board meeting. **(AP8)**

In response to the recommendations relating to the regrading of the post of Chief Executive members **AGREED** that the Board's Human Resources consulting firm, 'HeadsTogether', should be asked to progress this proposal as part of a wider structural review of grading in the Board's Executive team.

Members **NOTED** update provided.

9. KEY ISSUES OF PUBLIC INTEREST

Members **NOTED** a paper which detailed recent issues of public interest relevant to the Board's areas of work.

10. PRIVATE SESSION WITH THE CHIEF CONSTABLE INCLUDING THE CHIEF CONSTABLE'S ACCOUNTABILITY REPORT TO THE BOARD

The Chair welcomed the Chief Constable Jon Boutcher, Deputy Chief Constable Bobby Singleton, Chief Operating Officer (COO) Pamela McCreedy, ACC Ryan Henderson, ACC Davy Beck, T/ACC Stephen Murray, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) People & Organisational Development Clare Duffield, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Strategic Planning & Transformation Aldrina Magwood and ACO Corporate Services Mark McNaughten to the meeting.

Following this the Board Chair invited Members' questions to the Chief Constable and the following matters were discussed with the PSNI Leadership team:

- **Employment of Individuals with Additional Needs**

In response PSNI confirmed that it currently employs a number of individuals with additional needs and has made adjustments in recruitment and training to support them. Additionally, they have introduced changes to accommodate neurodiverse candidates and provide tailored learning support.

- **Update on Crossmaglen & Newtownhamilton Stations**

In response the Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Strategic Planning & Transformation provided detail that the plans for Crossmaglen are progressing, including the development of more user-friendly 3D drawings and engagement with the planning department.

In relation to Newtownhamilton, renovations have faced delays but are still in progress.

- **Ombudsman's Comments on Investigation Delays**

In response PSNI acknowledged the lengthy investigation times but emphasised ongoing work with partner agencies to streamline processes. While PSNI will continue to defend itself when necessary, the focus will remain on improving the efficiency of the processes.

- **Officers Seeking Benefits Due to Illness**

Concerns were raised around the process for officers having to seek Employment Support Allowance whilst on sick leave. In response the Chief Constable emphasised his commitment to supporting officers with legitimate health concerns while ensuring fairness in the system. Efforts are being made to balance supporting those in need while addressing any misuse of the system.

- **Succession Planning for Assistant Chief Constable (ACC) Role**

Further information was sought on the pipeline of candidates for the Police Executive Leadership programme and onward progression to the ACC rank.

In response PSNI provided detail that it has a strong track record of promotions and talent development. A new Executive Leadership Program is in place to support future leaders and career development initiatives include mentoring, leadership programs, and external speaker engagements.

PSNI also advised that a career development framework has been established to assess performance and potential and a number of officers have successfully completed the Executive Leadership Program Level 5 since 2022 with a Level 4 leadership program also being introduced to build a pipeline of future leaders through to the level 5.

- **Steps Taken After IPT Judgment on Journalists & Lawyers**

In response the Chief Constable provided detail that ongoing internal reviews and oversight are in place to prevent past mistakes alongside efforts to improve disclosure policies and balance public interest vs. security concerns continue.

Further detail was provided that the McCullough review is being conducted with full access to materials and engagement with legal experts to ensure decisions align with human rights principles.

- **Close Protection for the Judiciary**

In response PSNI provided detail that it has developed a new policy to review protection provided to judges and other principals, ensuring assessments are rigorous and transparent.

A three-step process has been introduced: initial assessment by the Protective Measures Committee, decision by the Deputy Chief Constable, and an appeals process to the Chief Constable.

The draft policy is being consulted upon. The goal is to complete the process within the calendar year and assess potential cost savings.

Detail was provided that each individual case will be reviewed under the new policy and PSNI is also coordinating with external bodies such as the NIO and Department of Justice.

- **West Midlands Police Investigation**

In response PSNI informed Members that the investigation into an incident on the September 22, 2023, remains ongoing and continues to be led by West Midlands Police, with Greater Manchester Police assisting.

Detail was provided that an independent King's Counsel has reviewed the investigation and confirmed its practical independence and professionalism.

Further information was provided that the complexity of the case has led to delays and whilst one aspect of the investigation resulted in a caution for common assault a second strand is still ongoing, with evidence yet to be fully gathered.

The Chair thanked the Chief Constable Jon Boutcher, Deputy Chief Constable Bobby Singleton, Chief Operating Officer (COO) Pamela McCreedy, ACC Ryan Henderson, ACC Davy Beck, T/ACC Stephen Murray, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) People & Organisational Development Clare Duffield, Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Strategic Planning & Transformation Aldrina Magwood and ACO Corporate Services Mark McNaughten and they left the meeting.

11. QUESTIONS FOR THE CHIEF CONSTABLE

11.1 Issues Arising from Committees

There were no issues arising from recent committee meetings for the Board's attention.

11.2 Committee Written Questions and Responses

Members **NOTED** the PSNI responses to Committee written questions for the previous period since the last Board meeting.

11.3 Individual Members' Written Questions and Responses

Members **NOTED** the PSNI responses to written questions and follow up responses to verbal questions from the Board meeting in December 2024.

12. COMMUNICATION ISSUES

None.

13. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Vice Chair raised the matter of Members written questions to the Chief Constable and the process for Board follow up to responses, to ensure there is a mechanism to progress issues which may be raised in the response.

Members discussed the benefit of receiving additional information from written responses and that questions arising from Committees normally relate to their work and will therefore be progressed by the Committee, if necessary.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to give further consideration to responses to Members written questions at Board meetings to establish whether Member is content with response or follow up by the Board is required.

(AP9)

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next full Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday 6 March 2025 at 9.30am in James House.

The meeting closed at 3.20pm.

Strategic Planning & Governance
February 2025

Chair