

## **NORTHERN IRELAND POLICING BOARD**

### **MINUTES OF MEETING OF RESOURCES COMMITTEE HELD ON THURSDAY 27 FEBRUARY 2025 AT 9.30AM IN JAMES HOUSE**

#### **PRESENT:**

- (2)** Mr Trevor Clarke MLA (Chair)  
Mr Frank McManus (Vice-Chair)\*  
Mr Keith Buchanan MLA\*
- (2)** Ms Marian Cree  
Mr Gerry Kelly MLA  
Dr Kate Lavery  
Mr Peter McReynolds MLA  
Mrs Linda Dillon MLA  
Mr Les Allamby
- (3)** Ms Nuala McAllister MLA

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

- (1)** Mr Mark McNaughten, ACO Corporate Services
- (1)** PSNI Director of Legal Services

#### **EX OFFICIO MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE:**

Mr Brendan Mullan (Board Vice-Chair)  
Mr Tommy O'Reilly

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

Mrs Sinead Simpson, Chief Executive  
Mr Sam Hagen, Director of Resources  
Eight Board Officials

- (1)** Items 6.3.1 & 6.3.2
- (2)** Item 4 to close
- (3)** Left meeting at item 6.3.2

\*Attended meeting via video-conference facility.

## **1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Mr Peter Osborne and Mr Alan Chambers MLA.

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

## **2. CONFLICTS OF INTEREST**

A Committee Member declared an interest in respect of engagement with some of the parties listed in the paper at item 6.2 (NIPB – Annual update on ongoing Legal Cases). The interest was noted with no further action deemed necessary.

## **3. DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 DECEMBER 2024**

The Committee considered the draft minutes of the meetings held on 23 and 30 January 2025.

It was **RESOLVED** that:

- The minutes of the Committee meetings held on 23 and 30 January 2025 be approved.

## **4. COMMITTEE ACTION LOG**

The Committee **NOTED** the correspondence issued to PSNI following the January 2025 Resources Committee meeting and the PSNI's response to the matters raised which was included in the meeting papers. The Director of Resources provided a verbal synopsis of progress against the actions noted in the Committee's action log including a summary of those actions now considered closed.

Issues discussed by Members in respect of the Committee action log included:

- In respect of AP1 from the January meeting regarding pass marks for recent internal promotion processes, a Member noted recent engagement with 2 officers (who had been temporarily promoted)

who had been unsuccessful in this process and have subsequently decided to leave the service on foot of the outcome of the promotion process. The Member advised that they would keep the Committee informed in respect of any further engagement around this issue. The Committee welcomed being kept updated and noted that, while the Board does not deal with specific individual cases, issues such as these can become relevant in the wider context. Members also discussed the broader issue of the long-term back filling of posts by way of temporary promotions, disparities in the available time for officers to prepare for promotion opportunities dependent on whether they are in a front-line vs office-based roles, and the lack of a defined pass mark at the first stage of the promotion process.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** a presentation from PSNI on Lessons Learned from current recruitment and recent internal promotion processes (both Sergeant & Inspector) would be scheduled in the Committee Programme of work for the 2025-26 year, and that consideration would be given to inviting the PFNI to attend that meeting to provide input and perspective on this issue. **AP1**

The CE noted that the Board Chair and Vice Chair would also raise this matter in the course of their normal engagement with PFNI.

- In respect of AP2 from the January meeting regarding clarification sought on a budget line variance in the January PSNI Finance Report, Members were advised that this was a reporting error and has now been corrected in the report provided to Members for today's meeting.
- Regarding AP3 from the January meeting in respect of the Kinnegar Site purchase, while the action point was noted as closed, a Member requested an update on where the process now stands. The Director of Resources advised that the business case was in the final stages

and is likely to be submitted by the end of February. The CE also noted that this point would be raised at the mid-monthly meeting with the Chief Constable.

- AP4 from the January meeting related to Stability Index Rates for under-represented groups in the student officer cohort. Members noted the response provided and went on to discuss regulations in respect of the age/length of service at which officers can retire from the service and whether this could be extended as a way of alleviating some of the resourcing pressures.

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

### **5.1 Update on Disposal through the Public Sector disposal mechanism**

Members considered correspondence received from PSNI providing an update on the disposal of Castlederg Station through the public sector disposal mechanism (D1 process). The correspondence confirmed that the necessary milestones in that process had not been met, allowing now for the disposal of the site to proceed via the open market.

In discussions Members considered the impact of this on the ongoing Judicial Review noting that in these circumstances, the JR may have no further basis to proceed.

Following discussion Members **AGREED** to recommend the Board approves PSNI to proceed as proposed in their correspondence and progress the disposal of Castlederg Station via the open market. **AP2**

### **5.2 PSNI - Revised Budget Allocation 2024-25**

The Committee noted correspondence copied to the Board from DoJ to the Chief Constable advising that an additional allocation to PSNI of £1m non-ringfenced Resource DEL had been agreed to fund the additional pressures arising as a result of Storm Eowyn. NOTED.

### **5.3 NI Policing Board - Draft Budget 2025-26 Allocation**

The Committee noted correspondence from the DoJ to the Board's Chief Executive confirming the Board's draft budget allocation for the 2025-26 year. Members were advised that the NIPB Resource Plan would come to the Committee once the final budget had been received. NOTED.

### **5.4 PSNI - Draft Budget 2025-26 Allocation**

The Committee noted correspondence copied to the Board from DoJ to the Chief Constable confirming the PSNI's draft budget allocation for the 2025-26 year. Members were advised that the PSNI Resource Plan would come to the Committee once the final budget had been received. NOTED

### **5.5 Letter to Board Chair from Minister Long - Independent Assessor of PSNI Recruitment Vetting**

The Committee considered correspondence from the DoJ to the Board Chair advising of the launch of the competition to appoint an Independent Assessor of PSNI Recruitment Vetting. Members requested confirmation on whether the Board had to be consulted regarding this appointment and the CE confirmed that was the case.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to write to Minister of Justice regarding her intentions in relation to consulting with the Board when the appointment process is complete. **AP3**

### **5.6 Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) - Annual Leave for Probationary Officers**

The Committee noted a Policing Policy and Strategy Division Circular confirming the MoJ's formal approval to increase the annual leave entitlement for probationary officers from 22 days to 25 days with effect from 1 April 2025. NOTED.

## **5.7 NIPB Management Accounts January 2025**

The Committee noted the NIPB Management Accounts for the period up to the end January 2025.

A Member noted easements attributable to a reduction in the number of Police Appeals Tribunals (PATs) being progressed during the current year and whether the Board had any sense of why this is the case. Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to write to PSNI seeking information on the likely reasons for this reduction in the number of PATs. **AP4**

A Member asked whether the Board was forecasting any further easements before year end and the Director of Resources confirmed that an underspend was expected at year end. He advised Members that this is, in part, due to unforeseen circumstances in respect of an ongoing legal case for which the Board had accrued funds to settle. However, it is now anticipated at the conclusion of the case this cost will not be realised and therefore this accrued sum will contribute to the year-end underspend mentioned above. The Director of Resources noted that more detail will be provided in the quarterly substantive update to the Committee on the Board's Management Accounts.

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

### **6.1 Police Pensions and Injury Benefits (PPIB)**

#### **6.1.1 PPIB – Cases for February 2025**

A Board official from Police Pensions and Injury Benefits branch presented a paper requesting Members consider the outcome of decisions taken by Selected Medical Practitioners (SMP) in respect of 38 assessments considered and provided opinion on, and the decisions taken by Independent Medical Referees (IMR) in respect of 14 assessments.

Members were also asked to consider one anonymised submission provided via the CJSM platform, in respect of a SMP reconsideration request and, based on the information provided, advise if the Committee is content that the case should now be referred back for reconsideration by the SMP.

As it was not specifically noted in the cover paper, a Member requested clarification on the basis for the reconsideration request and a Board official advised that it was as a result of the provision of further medical evidence in support of the request.

Following discussion Members:

- **NOTED** the outcome of the decisions made by Selected Medical Practitioners and **CONFIRMED** the implementation and reassessment dates for the 38 assessments outlined,
- **NOTED** the outcome of the decisions taken by Independent Medical Referees and **CONFIRMED** the implementation and reassessment dates for the 14 assessments outlined, and,
- **AGREED**, on the basis of the information provided, that the one anonymised reconsideration application should be referred back to the SMP for reconsideration.

### 6.1.2 Pension Scheme Manager Report

The T/Police Pensions and Injury Benefits Director presented a paper updating the Committee on police pension related work since the last meeting.

The focus of the update provided to Members related to a proposed change in the processing of further medical evidence (FME) from serving officers ahead of their SMP appointments. Members were advised that despite

timeframes outlined by the Board, receipt of FME shortly before or, in some cases, on the day of appointment remains an issue. Members were advised of the impact of this in terms of increased pressure on Board staff to review and prepare this information for inclusion with case referrals at short notice.

The Committee noted the proposals included in the flow chart provided which sets out that upon receipt of the 'red envelope' Board Officials will request confirmation from officers (via PSNI) if it is their intention to provide FME in support of their application. If not, their case will proceed to appointment and if so, their case will be put on a waiting list until the FME has been received. If an officer confirms that there is no FME and proceeds to provide same, their appointment will be cancelled, and they will be placed on a waiting list until their case is ready to be processed. Their appointment will subsequently be offered to another officer whose case is ready for appointment.

Members sought clarification that these proposals had been consulted on with stakeholders and Board officials provided assurance that this had been the case, and that work is ongoing in respect of seeking ways to enhance the information provided to officers at the start of the application process.

The T/Police Pensions & Injury Benefits Director went on to provide Members with a brief update in respect of the deadline for the issue of remedied pension statements relating to the McCloud remedy. Members were advised that while PSNI have provided assurances that most statements will go out as planned, there are a small number (due to a systems issues relating to transfer/opt-ins/opt-outs) that will not meet the deadline. The Committee noted that a later "*relevant date*" can be agreed where the circumstances are outside the control of the Scheme Administrator (PSNI).

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** the Committee will be advised of the agreed "*relevant date*" when remedied pension statements will be issued to



those officers affected. **AP5**

## **6.2 NIPB - Annual update on ongoing legal cases/settlements etc**

The T/Police Pensions & Injury Benefits Director briefed the Committee on a paper providing an annual update on ongoing NIPB legal cases including timelines for progression, anticipated costs/settlements and the date the cases were first lodged. In respect of one case a Member noted that, in order to be assured in respect of the Board processes, it may be useful to seek legal advice on the Board's practice of prioritising the processing of Ill Health Retirement (IHR) and Injury on Duty (IOD) Award applications from serving officers over retrospective Injury on Duty applications R-IOD Award applications from former officers.

Following discussion, it was **AGREED** to seek legal advice in respect of the Board's processes regarding the prioritisation of IHR and IOD applications from serving officers over R-IOD applications from former officers. **AP6**

At this point and ahead of welcoming PSNI to the meeting, the Chief Executive took the opportunity to take the view of Members in respect of arrangements for the upcoming Board meeting in view of the ongoing disruption/protests at recent PCSP meetings.

Following discussion, the CE thanked Members for their input and advised she would discuss the matter further with the Chair and Vice-Chair and, following engagement with PSNI on the matter, Members would be updated in due course ahead of the March Board meeting.

## **6.3 PSNI**

The Committee Chair welcomed the Assistant Chief Officer (ACO) Corporate Services and PSNI's Director of Legal Services to the meeting.

### **6.3.1 PSNI Finance Report**

The ACO Corporate Services presented Members with the monthly PSNI Finance Report as at the end of January 2025.

Members were advised that PSNI is reporting a break-even position year-to-date, with a small full-year financial pressure due to unexpected costs following Storm Eowyn, having now been covered by additional funding as noted in correspondence considered earlier in the meeting.

On capital expenditure, Members were advised a projected £2 million easement originally reported no longer applies due to delays in the finalising the sale of the Desertcreat site which will now carry over into the next financial year.

The ACO Corporate Services also highlighted that the budget line variance queried by Members in the January PSNI Finance Report was a reporting error and this has now been corrected in the report provided to Members for today's meeting.

Members noted the information provided in relation to:

- the significant and increasing pressures in terms of costs for Ill Health Retirements,
- the business case for the Police College which has now been submitted to DoJ,
- the Workforce Recovery business case which has now received Ministerial approval and been submitted to DoF, and,
- the award of the contract services contract which Members were advised, was subject to a full procurement process.

Following the presentation Member discussions with PSNI included a request for updates regarding the timeframe for settlements in relation to both the Data Breach and Holiday Pay Compensation cases. In respect of

the Data Breach case, PSNI advised that there was no indication that a settlement would be in place before year end. Members sought further information on whether the sums payable would be equal for all claimants and the Director of Legal Services provided background information in relation to the Group Litigation Order and discussed that each claimant was likely to be affected to a similar extent. A Member also asked if PSNI had any sense of where the final figure may land in terms of both the Data Breach and Holiday pay cases. PSNI provided information on the early assessment of costs relating to both these cases and how liability has since been reduced from the earlier estimate but that the final sum has yet to be agreed.

Members also discussed in more detail the graph provided in this month's Finance Report showing the upward trend in Ill Health Retirement costs and specifically the note within the papers that the graph "*does not reflect the full costs of the IHR process*". PSNI advised that this statement is intended to demonstrate that related costs associated with the administrative and support functions in relation to the processing of Ill Health Retirements are not reflected in the graph. Following discussion, the PSNI agreed to, in so far as possible, endeavour to provide an estimate of these support function costs. **AP7**

Members also further discussed the Workforce Recovery Plan business case and the likely year end capital position.

### **6.3.2 PSNI Annual Update on Litigation and Financial Compensation Process**

The Director of Legal Services presented Members with the annual update on PSNI Litigation and Financial Compensation Processes which focussed on a number of areas including:

- An overview of civil litigation costs/damages in defending claims

against the PSNI,

- Key cost drivers and challenges, and
- Strategies for improving effectiveness and efficiency.

The Committee was briefed on the number and breakdown by type, of active cases, the differential in costs between County Court and High Court cases, the factors which can drive up legal costs such as delays in court listings and the use of external experts such as forensic accountants etc.

Members welcomed the update in relation to the work of the Senior Case Review Panel which has been set up at the Committee's request following concerns raised by the Committee around the governance and review mechanisms in place to ensure that all high value and long running cases are reviewed at regular intervals to ensure that where it is appropriate to do so, cases are settled at the earliest opportunity.

Members also noted and welcomed ongoing work to potentially include Legal Services Branch in the PSNI's Transformation programme with a view to considering additional "in house" capacity which may lead to a reduction in outsourcing.

Other areas discussed with PSNI included:

- The high value cases between 6 – 10 years old and steps being taken to bring these to a conclusion, and,
- A potential feedback loop to DoJ regarding any structural/wider criminal justice issues which are not solely in PSNI's gift to address.

The Chair thanked the ACO Corporate Services and the Head of Legal Services for the presentation.

Prior to leaving the meeting, at this stage the ACO Corporate Services provided Members with an early breakdown of the statistics from the recently closed PSNI recruitment campaign. The Committee welcomed

being provided with the information and noted that a full equality report would be developed and brought to the Committee in due course.

The Chair thanked the ACO Corporate Services and Director of Legal Services and they left the meeting.

### **6.3.3 Written update on outstanding South Armagh Review Recommendations**

The Strategic Planning & Governance Manager presented a written update provided by PSNI on progress to implement the 9 recommendations, oversight of which sits with the Resources Committee, from the South Armagh Review Report. The Committee noted that 8 out of the 9 recommendations are now considered complete.

Following consideration of the report Members agreed that they are now content that no further written updates to the Committee are required in respect of the 8 completed recommendations (4, 12, 13, 14, 15, 41, 42 & 43).

In respect of Recommendation 6 which (relating to South Armagh Police Station), the Committee noted that this remains “in progress” and that due to the unprecedented budgetary situation, the joint ambition of the local community and the police for the consolidation, redevelopment and disposal of elements of the police estate in South Armagh has been significantly constrained.

In respect of this recommendation, the Committee agreed to continue to receive 6 monthly written updates on progress towards implementation and also agreed to write to PSNI to request information on where Recommendation 6 sits in relation to the proposed capital expenditure for the 2025/26 year. In addition, the Committee requested information on what the intention is for the memorials currently located on the Crossmaglen station site. **AP8**

#### **6.4 Draft Police Remuneration Review Body Submission**

A Board official briefed the Committee on the Board's draft submissions to the Police Remuneration Review Body (PRRB) and Senior Salaries Review Body (SRRB). Members noted the timeline for the provision of written evidence (w/c 24 March 2025) and that the oral evidence sessions would take place on Wednesday 14 May 2025.

The Committee noted the recommendations they had previously put forward for inclusion in the DoJ's remit letter which included:

- Parity should extend to allowances other than where the local context dictated a difference, such as in relation to the Northern Ireland Transitional Allowance.

A Member noted the correspondence from the Minister (included with the papers) which set out the Minister's reasons for not including this request in her submission to the PRRB and asked for clarification on why, in these circumstances, this request remained within the Board's draft submission. The Director of Resources provided a brief explanation of the 2 separate processes in that the current draft response before the Committee for consideration is a response to the PRRB's independent call for evidence and therefore the inclusion of the above point is at the Board's discretion, notwithstanding that it differs for the Minister's view.

Following discussion, the Committee **AGREED** to recommend the Board approves the draft submissions to the PRRB and SSRB. **AP9**

#### **6.5 General Authorisation – Renewal for Fermanagh District Recreation Club**

The Emerging Priorities Manager briefed Members on an application made by PSNI for a renewal of the annual General Authorisation for Fermanagh District Recreation Club. The Committee noted that Members had previously approved an annual application from the PSNI for the Fermanagh

Recreation Club in April 2024, and that the application has been reviewed against Service Procedure No.48/2007 (currently under review) and is fully compliant. The Committee was advised that the PSNI's latest estimate for the completion of the Service Procedure review is end of February 2025.

Following discussion Members agreed to

- **APPROVE** the licence application for one year (1 January 2025 – 31 December 2025).

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

No questions were agreed to put to the Chief Constable.

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

None.

#### **9. ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Director of Resources advised Members of the intention to engage HeadsTogether to assist with the development of the Senior Officer Appointments guidance. The Committee noted this update.

At this point the Chair also reminded Members to provide their responses to the Committee Effectiveness questions which were issued via e-mail in early February. It was agreed Board officials would recirculate the questionnaires to Committee Members **AP10**.

#### **10. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

The next meeting is scheduled for **Thursday 27 March 2025** at James House.

The meeting ended at 13.30pm

**CHAIR**

**RESOURCES DIRECTORATE**  
**FEBRUARY 2025**